

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

Phase One Report

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Glossary

BPR:	Business Process Redesign
CASE:	Council of Administrators of Special Education
CACFS:	California Alliance of Child and Family Services
CAPSES:	California Association of Private Special Education Schools
CASA:	Court Appointed Special Advocates
CASEMIS:	California Special Education Management Information System
CDE:	California Department of Education
CJC:	California Judicial Council
COE:	County Office of Education
CSIS:	California School Information Services
CWDA:	County Welfare Directors Association
CWS/CMS:	Child Welfare Services/Case Management System
CYC:	California Youth Connection
DMH:	Department of Mental Health
DSS:	Department of Social Services
FYS:	Foster Youth Services
ILP:	Independent Living Program
LEA:	Local Educational Agency
LCI:	Licensed Children's Institution
NPA:	Nonpublic Agency
NPS:	Nonpublic School
RCL:	Rate Classification Level
SELPA:	Special Education Local Plan Area
USD:	Unified School District

Executive Summary

This Phase I report for the Study of the Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes includes a list of issues to be addressed and a refined study design. Group home children are the state's potentially most vulnerable and "at risk" population. Removed from their homes by the state, they are placed in the most service-intensive settings and receive the highest levels of care. The limited outcome measures available for this population indicate that upon exiting the system almost half do not complete high school, half are unemployed, and 40 percent are on public assistance or incarcerated (Bernstein, 2000). The charge of this study is to "examine policies, procedures, and practices related to educational and residential placement, records and information transfer, interagency and inter-jurisdictional relationships, and fiscal arrangements."

The study is broken into two phases. The purpose of this first exploratory phase is to "validate and refine the preliminary issue list and the study design... to develop a refined plan for collection of detailed information regarding each issue that will support the development of recommendations." The second phase of the study will involve the implementation of the revised study design, data collection and analysis of policies and procedures, and the development of recommendations.

The contents of this report are best summarized in two graphics. The first is a table showing a summary of the updated issues list for this study. These issues fall into six major categories: fiscal arrangements, capacity, responsibility and accountability, data, inter-agency coordination and collaboration, and advocacy. This table is shown on page 14 of this report.

A second important graphic, found on page 16, summarizes the methods to be used for this study. These methods fall into three major categories: state-level analysis, case study county analyses, and stakeholder interactions. The two major products emanating from the county case study analyses will be a series of profiles outlining the education experience of over 200 group home students and a policy and procedures schematic for each county. A schematic of this type will also be created at the state-level reflecting the interaction between state rules, procedures, databases, and agencies.

The 2000 Budget Act specifies that this study "should include ... funding issues resulting from inter-SELPA transfers, the opening of new LCIs or NPSs during the school year and LCI placement practices that may be impacting special education funding." All aspects of the study design, as summarized in the Methods Overview section of this report, will be used to address these questions.

The primary purpose of this study is to develop specific recommendations for the redesign of existing policies, procedures, and practices related to the education of group home children at both the state and local levels. Our goal will be to have these recommendations be evidence-based. While qualitative approaches to the development of information will be used throughout, findings also will be based on quantitative information. Policy recommendations for this study will be based on processes of input and review from stakeholders, state and local interviewees, and project advisors. While a broad range of input will be actively sought and carefully considered, all final recommendations ultimately will be independently derived by the research team for this project.

Introduction

This is the Phase I Report for a study of the Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes. The purpose of this project is to fully examine these policies, procedures, and practices and to conduct a study that will result in a clear set of policy recommendations. The primary goal of this work is to create “a detailed road map for improving services for group home children.”

This report presents work that has been accomplished during Phase I of the study and to present a full list of the issues to be examined. It describes our methods for data collection, and the strategies that will be used to develop recommendations in response to the study research questions.

Youth residing in group homes represent the state’s potentially most vulnerable and “at risk” children. Removed from their homes by the state, they are placed in the most service-intensive settings and receive the highest levels of care. The limited outcome measures available for this population indicate that upon exiting the system almost half do not complete high school, half are unemployed, and 40 percent are on public assistance or incarcerated (Bernstein, 2000).

People who work with children placed in group homes widely acknowledge that education is by far the most powerful potential vehicle for making a long-term difference in these children’s lives. Recent legislative investigations and research (Parrish et al., 2001; Caywood, 2000; Montoya, 2000) have questioned the extent to which service agencies are effectively meeting the needs of these children, particularly their educational needs.

In response to these concerns, the California Department of Education (CDE), School Fiscal Services Division developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for this study. The CDE awarded this contract to the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and its subcontractors SRA Associates, Lodestar/Management Research, Inc. (Lodestar), and Human Systems Development (HSD).

Research questions

As outlined in the RFP, the charge of this study is to “examine policies, procedures, and practices related to, for example, educational and residential placement, records and information transfer, interagency and inter-jurisdictional relationships, and fiscal arrangements.” The RFP also directs project staff to address the following questions:

1. What are the key state and local policies, procedures, and practices that influence the educational placement of children in group homes?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the policies, procedures, and practices in determining the educational placement of children in group homes?
3. What are the causes for, and the magnitude of, any problems identified, and the extent to which each cause contributes to the problem?

4. What are effective options for state action to ameliorate the problems? (Possible state actions could include changes in statute, regulations, and administrative policies, or changes in state funding formulas and funding levels.)
5. What local actions, including procedural changes, could ameliorate the problems?
6. What are the estimated state and local costs and benefits of implementing the different options?

In addition to these study questions, the 2000 Budget Act Item (6110-001-0890, provision 14) that authorized this study is very explicit that it should address issues of finance. It states, “the evaluation should include, but not be limited to, funding issues resulting from inter-SELPA transfers, the opening of new LCIs or NPSs during the school year and LCI placement practices that may be impacting special education funding.”

The study team notes the difference between the budget language and the RFP for this project, which have been discussed with both the project Advisory Group and Stakeholder Group. All have agreed that the fiscal focus found in the budget language is to be central to the conduct of this study. At the same time, the initial research questions found in the RFP also remain as important priorities.

Among other strategies, concepts of “Business Process Redesign” (BPR) will assist in tackling these study questions. For purposes of this study, we define BPR as the analysis of inter- and intra-agency processes associated with the residential and educational placement of group home children, and the redesign of these processes to achieve improvements in performance, as measured by appropriateness, timeliness, and cost.

BPR is an appropriate tool to apply to the issues associated with the educational placements of group home children because it: 1) places primary focus on effectively meeting the needs of the “customer,” who in this case is a minor and a member of a population which has received limited attention within the educational system; and 2) requires an examination of processes *across* internal and external organizational boundaries, independent of existing organizational structures.

Purpose of phase I report

The CDE has stipulated in the RFP that the study comprise two phases. First, an exploratory study that shall “validate and refine the preliminary issue list and the study design... to develop a refined plan for collection of detailed information regarding each issue that will support the development of recommendations.” The second phase will involve the implementation of the revised study design, data collection and analysis of policies and procedures, and the development of recommendations.

This document represents the interim report outlining work completed during the initial, exploratory phase of the study. It also includes elaboration of the study issues first described in the proposal to conduct this study, and a refined study design.

Work Completed to Date

As described above, the first phase of the study has served as an exploratory study to refine the study design outlined in the proposal. The AIR project team proposed a study approach that features three main components: detailed analyses of state-level policies, procedures, and practices; county-level analyses of local policies, procedures, and practices; and Stakeholder Group interactions. The following description of project work completed to date highlights our initial meetings with the CDE, the Advisory Group, and our Stakeholder Group; outlines our selected case study counties; and illustrates some of the initial state and county case study work that has been completed.

CDE staff and Advisory Group meetings

Initial meetings with the CDE and the Advisory Group occurred on January 15, 2002 at the CDE in Sacramento. The Advisory Group was convened by the CDE in order to provide oversight to the project. Its members include staff from the CDE, the California Department of Finance, and the Legislative Analyst's Office. The list of Advisory Group members is included in Appendix A. In preparation for this meeting, project staff members prepared materials that included, among other items, the proposed list of preliminary issues; summaries of data available by county to aid discussion of site visit county selection; and a list of potential stakeholders.

Discussion between project staff and the Advisory Group covered the following topics:

- Introduction of staff and advisors
- The study's background and purpose from the advisors' perspective
- The advisors' role in the project by each of the agencies that serve group home children
- Clarification of the apparent discrepancy in the study's emphasis as expressed in the RFP and the budget language that authorized the study (the conclusion of the discussion was the preeminent emphasis on the budget language, while retaining the initial research questions)
- Feedback and comments from the advisors regarding the proposed study plan
- Review of the preliminary issues list compiled by the project team
- Counties selected as site visit sites
- Composition and role the Stakeholder Group
- Need for support from agencies in gaining access to data and research subjects (group homes, NPS, county agencies, etc.)

Stakeholder interactions

Project staff developed a list of potential Stakeholder Group members during proposal development and revised this list after consulting with project advisors. Staff made phone calls to solicit potential participants' interest, inquired into recommendations; based invitations on knowledge of programs gained through previous studies and attendance at regional meetings of groups that serve foster youth.

The first Stakeholder Group meeting was held on February 22, 2002 at AIR's Sacramento office. The minutes of this meeting and a list of the attendees can be found in Appendix B.

The purpose of this first meeting was for stakeholders to provide assistance to project staff in the elaboration of study issues and help chart the project's next steps. The meeting was also an occasion for stakeholders to express their views on these issues. Stakeholders were invited to bring their opinions and perspectives, plus any materials to support them that they wished to share.

The Stakeholder Group incorporates a broad range of affiliations relevant to the study. The members' affiliations include: foster youth organizations, state agencies, LEAs, legal groups, local placement agencies, group homes, legislative representatives, SELPAs, FYS, and NPS. We will form subcommittees within the group to optimize the application of individuals' areas of expertise.

Discussion between project staff and the Stakeholder Group covered the following topics:

- Study overview
- Research questions
- Case study site county sample
- Stakeholder Group composition
- Other groups that are meeting on related topics that study team should be aware of
- Resources (publications, reports, documents, data) that study team should have/include
- Issues affecting the education of children residing in group homes
- Potential solutions
- Brainstorming
- Next steps
- Subcommittee development

Selection of case study counties

Eight case study counties for the county-level analyses were selected during the first phase of the study and presented to the Advisory Group. The selected counties include Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Mateo, Shasta, Stanislaus, and Yolo. The Advisory Group approved of the selection of these counties at the January 15 meeting.

The goal of the selection process was to capture diversity in county size, geography, urbanicity, data capacity, FYS representation, and percentage import/export of group home youth. At the same time, the sample represents a significant percentage of group home youth. The 8 counties in the sample represent 48% of all group home children, 49% of all group home children attending NPS, 59% of all NPS students, 44% of all NPS, and 42% of all group homes. The sample includes larger (Los Angeles, San Diego) and smaller counties (Shasta, Yolo), which also reflect a range of geographic locations and urbanicity. Discussions with local agencies and other contacts confirmed that at least some counties have significant data capacity that will be utilized by the study. While most counties were recipients of Foster Youth Services funds, staff ensured, for purposes of comparison, that the sample also included counties that did not receive these funds (Stanislaus, Yolo). The sample also reflects a variety in percentage of foster youth placed in the county (import/export factor). Los Angeles County placed 85% of foster youth within the county. At the opposite end of the spectrum are counties such as Yolo where only 38% of foster youth were placed in the county.

Data on each county in California are presented in the table below. Supplemental data elements are attached in Appendix C. The counties selected in the sample are marked in gray. Although we have selected only eight case study counties, we intend to conduct phone interviews in a few additional counties that may present unique circumstances not captured in our sample. For example, we will seek understand the situation of group home youth in counties such as Mono and Inyo.

Summary of County Information for Site Visit Counties

COUNTY	Total Group Home Children ¹	Total Group Home Children in Special Education ¹	Total Group Home Children in NPS ¹	% of all Students in County in Group Homes ²	% of all Special Ed Students in County in NPS ²	2000-2001 FYS Grant Recipient ³	Number of Group Homes ⁴	Number of NPS ⁵	Number of Students Served in NPS ⁶	Percent of Foster Youth Placed In County ⁷	Rate Classification Levels ⁵
Alameda	1,203	392	211	0.30%	3.46%	Y	79	15	779	58.90%	4 to 14
Alpine	1	0	0	0.41%	0.00%	Y	0	0	0	0.00%	n/a
Amador	6	2	0	0.09%	0.25%	Y	0	0	2	35.10%	
Butte	126	67	6	0.24%	0.45%	Y	14	1	20	71.50%	7-12
Calaveras	27	12	2	0.28%	0.60%	Y	6	0	5	59.70%	
Colusa	6	0	0	0.10%	0.00%		0	0	0	48.50%	
Contra Costa	610	292	138	0.25%	2.21%	Y	55	12	425	69.30%	6 to 14
Del Norte	18	6	5	0.23%	0.00%		0	0		75.90%	
El Dorado	52	20	13	0.13%	3.14%	Y	19	3	103	59.50%	n/a
Fresno	459	182	9	0.17%	0.02%	Y	66	0	5	82.00%	6 to 14
Glenn	16	5	3	0.18%	0.00%	Y	0	0	0	38.60%	
Humboldt	46	15	4	0.14%	0.00%	Y	6	0	0	86.20%	
Imperial	96	21	3	0.19%	0.03%	Y	9	0	1	82.30%	n/a
Inyo	11	2	1	0.24%	0.47%	Y	1	0	2	51.20%	n/a
Kern	281	81	11	0.13%	0.08%	Y	31	1	12	89.50%	
Kings	20	4	1	0.05%	0.04%		0	0	1	75.10%	
Lake	38	20	7	0.26%	0.39%	Y	2	0	5	59.90%	8
Lassen	22	2	1	0.28%	0.00%		4	0	0	60.60%	
Los Angeles	5,435	2,763	1,436	0.18%	3.18%	Y	357	93	5590	85.90%	all
Madera	56	28	0	0.15%	0.00%	Y	9	0	0	66.70%	3 to 12
Marin	125	86	58	0.23%	4.07%		19	8	168	56.70%	
Mariposa	11	4	2	0.30%	0.00%	Y	1	0	0	79.40%	9
Mendocino	115	77	71	0.48%	4.04%	Y	9	3	97	66.40%	n/a
Merced	102	31	8	0.14%	0.38%	Y	8	0	22	55.60%	n/a
Modoc	13	7	0	0.51%	0.00%	Y	1	0	0	63.00%	10
Mono	1	0	0	0.04%	0.00%	Y	0	0	0	28.60%	
Monterey	133	29	7	0.11%	0.07%	Y	11	1	5	68.40%	
Napa	202	180	69	0.65%	3.76%		11	6	89	73.20%	
Nevada	19	5	4	0.09%	2.78%	Y	3	1	38	61.80%	n/a
Orange	1,351	507	138	0.16%	1.35%	Y	96	16	636	72.90%	4 to 14
Placer	108	55	28	0.17%	0.53%	Y	8	2	29	52.20%	n/a
Plumas	9	2	1	0.20%	0.00%		1	1	0	57.40%	
Riverside	1,205	650	375	0.25%	2.15%	Y	124	18	757	75.90%	n/a
Sacramento	771	282	152	0.22%	3.86%	Y	94	37	941	73.00%	6 to 14
San Benito	13	1	0	0.08%	0.00%		5	1	0	63.10%	
San Bernardino	1,084	486	212	0.19%	1.16%	Y	107	22	463	72.30%	GE 11
San Diego	1,219	595	225	0.15%	1.91%	Y	96	29	1008	85.60%	N/a
San Francisco	415	198	139	0.26%	4.62%	Y	27	20	317	53.10%	to 14
San Joaquin	340	251	75	0.19%	1.24%	Y	53	5	160	75.90%	
San Luis Obispo	133	60	8	0.22%	0.07%	Y	7	0	3	76.80%	6-14
San Mateo	201	70	28	0.11%	1.23%	Y	18	4	123	50.80%	
Santa Barbara	208	116	58	0.19%	1.45%	Y	20	1	92	72.40%	n/a
Santa Clara	632	271	113	0.13%	1.26%	Y	53	13	335	66.80%	n/a
Santa Cruz	105	42	9	0.15%	0.29%	Y	12	1	15	71.70%	n/a
Shasta	96	74	40	0.20%	1.99%	Y	35	5	72	82.60%	to 14
Sierra	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%		0	0	0	16.70%	
Siskiyou	35	8	5	0.32%	0.10%		0	0	1	61.30%	
Solano	108	45	27	0.09%	1.15%	Y	28	6	99	75.10%	n/a
Sonoma	279	177	121	0.24%	3.43%	Y	42	17	312	71.90%	
Stanislaus	161	88	43	0.11%	2.23%		28	8	262	72.10%	
Sutter	28	10	4	0.12%	0.21%		1	0	4	44.40%	
Tehama	21	7	6	0.14%	0.66%		5	0	7	71.80%	
Trinity	15	1	1	0.47%	0.00%		0	0	0	59.60%	
Tulare	249	75	6	0.19%	0.75%	Y	25	0	62	80.20%	
Tuolumne	8	2	0	0.07%	0.59%		0	0	6	66.70%	
Ventura	206	96	42	0.09%	1.17%	Y	17	5	164	77.90%	n/a
Yolo	105	51	35	0.23%	2.15%		7	1	64	38.20%	
Yuba	57	22	13	0.26%	0.38%	Y	4	0	7	37.90%	n/a
ALL Counties	18,416	8,578	3974	0.18%	2.06%	42	1,634	356	13,308	77.30%	
Sample Total	8,879	4,215	2,027	0.18%	2.06%	8	686	155	7,903	82.05%	
% of All in Sample	48%	49%	51.01%			19%	42%	44%	59%		

¹Source: Data matched between CWS/CMS and CASEMIS for the "Studies of the Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes" (Parrish et al., 2001)

²Source: Public School Enrollment and Staffing Data Files (CBEDS) for 1999-00 School Year

³Source: FYS Current Award List, January 2002, Educational Options Office, California Department of Education

⁴Source: Community Care Licensing Division, Department of Social Services, January 2002

⁵Source: Nonpublic Schools Database, June 1 2000, Special Education Division, California Department of Education

⁶Source: California Special Education Management Information System, December 1999 release

⁷Source: California Department of Social Services, CMS/CWS Reports, January 11, 2002

Initial state and county case study work

To ensure a full understanding of the issues in relation to this study, project staff conducted preliminary phone interviews with state-level contacts to gather updated information on the policies and procedures surrounding the placement of youth in group homes. These contacts included staff members from the following state government agencies: the DSS Rate Bureau, the DSS Foster Care Branch, the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), the California Youth Authority and the advocacy group California Youth Connection. The CDE SELPA consultant was contacted to discuss how protocols are monitored, the impact of AB 602, and fiscal reporting. Telephone and personal contacts to discuss the study have also been made with individual representatives of the Los Angeles County Inter-Agency Consortium for Children's Services, the presiding judges of dependency court in Los Angeles and San Diego County, the county offices of education, local school districts, local SELPAs, group home operators, non-public school and traditional school teachers, FYS coordinators, and others. These contacts have been used to: 1) inform key stakeholders at the local level about the study; 2) explore how Phase 2 data collection could be achieved; and 3) obtain information about local issues and concerns related to the educational placements of children in group homes. Appendix D contains county grids showing an initial assessment of the issues areas by county.

Project staff also conducted a considerable amount of background research on the organizations that serve group home children and the issues that affect them. This research included: a review of Senate/Assembly legislation; a review of CCLD group home regulation and laws; the collection of the California Judicial Council membership list for contacts in case study counties; inquiry into existing state-level data systems and fields pertaining to foster youth (CASEMIS, CDD 801B, CSIS, CWS/CMS, Rate Bureau Database); review of the status of and first report for the California Stakeholder Group; attendance at Foster youth-related meetings (FYS Advisory Group, Independent Living Skills Program); and the compilation of a review of available literature on foster youth/group home children and education. See Appendices E and F for a list of the publications and legislation that has been reviewed.

Presentations to inform Stakeholder Groups and local counties regarding the study have been made to a Statewide Meeting of SELPA Directors, an FYS Advisory Committee, and an inter-agency strategic planning workshop focusing on foster youth services in Los Angeles County. In addition to informing stakeholders about the study, these meetings provided the opportunity to gather information regarding inter-agency relationships and key issues at the local level in San Diego and Los Angeles Counties.

We have initiated the processes to gain access to agency records and to establish study liaisons within local county agencies, SELPAs, and districts in the eight counties. Project staff conducted phone interviews in proposed case study counties with the following goals: to initiate contact, to obtain participation in study, and to identify persons most familiar with fiscal practices and procedures for group home residents attending and not attending nonpublic schools.

Staff members initiated development of fieldwork protocols and initial face-to-face interviews were conducted in Fresno with group home operators, the FYS coordinator and the USD data person. (See Appendix G for the draft protocols for interviews with NPS staff and group home

youth.) In addition, a few group home records were reviewed to assess impact of new laws upon content of materials kept in residents' records (as compared with findings in prior study). Contacts were made with representatives of LA County Office of Education and LA Unified School District regarding data collection systems for foster youth. Staff also went to CDE offices in Sacramento to collect and review various FYS applications and year-end reports to inform baseline knowledge of the populations, procedures, and data systems present in each case study county.

Reports for phase I

We have submitted a monthly progress report for December and January that outlines the activities associated with the monthly invoice. This report is the final report for Phase I of the study as called for by the RFP.

Refinement of Preliminary Issues

An important component of Phase I has been to define more specifically the issues to be addressed through this study. In our prior study, AIR documented five categories of issues related to the education of group home children in California. This categorization continues to provide a useful framework on which to build for this study. In addition to expanding the five issue areas identified in the earlier study, at our first Stakeholder meeting "advocacy" was identified as a new issue area. During this initial Stakeholder Group meeting, held on 2/22, these six issue areas were also further examined and validated.

These issues are closely interrelated. Accountability and responsibility cannot be enforced in a system that lacks data for assessing the attainment of outcomes; consensus on appropriate outcomes cannot be achieved within a system of agencies with relationships characterized by a lack of coordination and even adversity; and reform is not possible in a system overwhelmed by the numbers and needs of the children in the system. Such an environment, in turn, leads to the interplay of fiscal arrangements and incentives that conflict with the needs of children.

Current funding arrangements affect the educational placements of group home children in various ways. Recent studies in Los Angeles County suggest that residential placements are influenced more by cost considerations than by the needs of the child. Directly tied to the issues of cost is the issue of scarce resources. A limited number of residential placement possibilities may create pressure for inappropriate educational placements. This issue can be further explored with staff of DSS who are familiar with the rate setting process and its implications. Another funding mechanism that may influence the educational placement of group home children is the apparent linkage of the availability of Medicaid funds to the placement of the student.

Another issue area is the insufficient capacity within the multiple agencies and institutions involved with foster children, including the courts, social services, juvenile justice, and educational systems to serve these students. The numbers of children requiring services, particularly children with special needs, seems to have overwhelmed the system. There are cases in which students who are ready to re-enter a public program are unable to due to insufficient capacity. The issue of

capacity leads to the question of responsibility and ultimately to the need for advocates to draw attention to the plight of these children.

Responsibility, accountability and compliance are another set of highly intertwined issues. The lines of responsibility associated with the educational placement of group home children do not seem to be clearly identified and the process by which those responsible are held accountable is even less clear. However, even if the system were identifiable, compliance may still prove to be a problem because the system is overburdened.

Accountability is in part hindered by the absence of information and adequate data systems at both state and local levels regarding the educational needs, status, and progress of group home children. The movement of group home youth in and among counties makes it an even greater challenge to develop appropriate educational placements since no county data systems are linked at this time. The limited amount of available and accurate data also hampers efforts at inter-agency cooperation and coordination.

Limited cooperation and coordination at all levels of service delivery is another factor that may adversely influence educational placements. Often, placement workers, group home staff, and educational staff do not have an opportunity to communicate and work together to adequately meet the needs of group home children. Confidentiality policies can also work at cross-purposes by preventing important information from being shared with relevant providers and advocates.

Given the limits of inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional collaboration, the need for advocacy on behalf of these children becomes paramount. It may appear on paper that group home children have parent and educational surrogates, but often in practice they do not have an independent advocate. Court appointed special advocates (CASAs) are intended to provide advocacy to children on an individual level. However, the supply of CASAs is limited. For example in San Diego County, approximately 350 children out of a total of over 7,000 children in out-of-home placement have CASAs. The Foster Youth Service (FYS) Program, in addition to being a mechanism of inter-agency coordination for providing services to group home residents is intended to provide advocacy for these children both at the system and individual child level. As with CASAs, however, the size of the FYS Program is limited. In Los Angeles County, which receives by far the greatest amount of funding for the program, there are approximately 25 staff who deal directly with children. The total population of children in group home placements ranges from 5,500 to 6,000. The limits of the current advocacy system is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

Preliminary issue list

Category	General Description	Specific Examples
Fiscal Arrangements	Current funding systems impact both the residential and educational placements of foster children, sometimes in conflict with the needs of the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Funding for school districts to support the supplemental educational and related service needs of group home children is generally only forthcoming when these services are delivered by NPS or NPA providers, creating an incentive for their use and for the placement of group home children in special education▪ Recent studies in Los Angeles County suggest that residential placements are impacted more by cost considerations than the needs of the child▪ Group homes may rely upon NPS funding for a viable funding base▪ Enrollment in an NPS sometimes may be a prerequisite for placement in an affiliated group home, resulting in some children attending NPS for whom this may not be the most appropriate instructional placement▪ Because NPS placements are only funded by the state for children who are in special education, and because of the differing definitions of emotional disturbance used by the Departments of Education and Mental Health, children with severe mental health needs sometimes may not be able to access needed NPS services
Capacity	Insufficient capacity within the multiple agencies and institutions involved with foster children, including the courts, social services, juvenile justice, and educational systems. All are overwhelmed by the numbers of children requiring services, particularly children with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Caseworkers in the urban areas of California confront caseloads higher than those found in other urban areas in the nation, and freely admit that they are able to pay little attention to educational needs and problems▪ Caseworkers acknowledge that the limited supply of beds in quality facilities requires that children are placed in facilities not appropriate for their needs▪ Public school counselors lack the time and training to effectively address the needs of foster children
Responsibility and Accountability	A lack of responsibility and accountability at both state and local levels regarding educational services for group home residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In many cases, caseworkers fail to notify LEAs when group home placements are made within the LEA's attendance boundaries▪ SELPA and district administrators acknowledge that they do not have the resources to properly monitor NPSs and that the state does not fund them for this▪ Judges routinely fail to identify the party that maintains the educational rights for the child▪ Assessment of the quality of both residential and educational placements is lacking▪ LEAs are often unaware of existing law regarding transfer of records, etc.
Data	The absence of information and adequate data system infrastructures at both state and local levels regarding the educational needs, status, and progress of children contributes to the lack of accountability and the potential for inappropriate placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Extant data systems, including the CWS/CMS and CASEMIS, are incongruous, difficult to access, and most often contain incomplete data fields▪ The Health and Education Passport system has not been effectively implemented by the state or in most counties▪ In many cases, placement workers provide no records and limited educational information to group home staff at the time of placement▪ Privacy protections can pose an obstacle to the necessary exchange of information between placement and educational agencies

Category	General Description	Specific Examples
Inter-Agency Coordination and Collaboration	The lack of inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination in the delivery of services to children, which in some cases reflects adversarial relations between agencies evidenced by lawsuits and public accusations of malfeasance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No clear lines of authority and responsibility for the education of group home residents within and among agencies at either the state or county levels▪ Little communication often exists among placement workers, group home, and school staff▪ Collaboration is inhibited by differences in terminology and definitions across agencies▪ Placement workers perceive that public schools resist enrolling LCI children
Advocacy	The vast majority of children in group home placement do not have a responsible party who is independent of the dependency care system to advocate for their educational rights on a consistent basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The parents of many dependents and wards retain educational rights for their children because the court fails to terminate parental rights and/or specify a party to assume those rights even though many of these parents take no active role or interest in their child's education▪ The demand for court appointed special advocates and educational surrogates, who both can provide this independent advocacy on behalf of a child, greatly exceeds the supply▪ The role of advocate often falls to group home staff, who may lack the knowledge to be effective advocates, and creates a potential conflict of interest for those group homes associated with NPS▪ All these issues are exacerbated by frequent changes in statutes, and cases where a child is exported to another county or out-of-state

Methods Overview

The overall design for this study is depicted below. Our three-pronged approach features extensive analyses at the state and county levels, as well as considerable interaction with the study's Stakeholder Group to inform policy issues and alternatives. The strategies to be used for each of these areas are outlined in the following sections of this report. The study timeline can be found in Appendix H.

Methods Overview

State-Level Analysis				Eight Case Study Counties				Stakeholder Group	
Document Review: -Laws -Regulations -Procedures -Policies	State Agency Case Studies: -CDE -DSS -DMH	Meet/Confer with State Organizations: -CYC -CAPSES -CASA -CASE -CJC	Develop BPR Policy/Procedures Schematic	Document Review: -FYS Applications -FYS Annual Reports -Agency Policies, Procedures Training Documents -Resident/ School Records	Placement Profiles of Youth: -# of Residential Placements -# of School Placements -Continuity of School Placement -Educational Outcomes	Interview/ Focus Groups: -Students/ Residents -Parents/ Surrogates -Services Providers (Case/ Placement Workers, LCI Operators)		Inform Development of Policy Issues List	
	Extant Data Analysis: -CASEMIS -CWS/CMS -FYS -Rate Bureau -CSIS	Develop Funding Alternatives for Educating Group Home Children		Meet/Confer with County Organizations: -County Dept. of Ed -County DSS -CYC -ILPs -CASA -FYS Groups	Extant Data Analyses: -FYS Data -USD/LEA Data	Site Visits: -LCIs -NPS -Public Schools -Court Community Schools	Develop BPR Policy/Procedures Schematic		Provide Information on Policy Alternatives

Methods for Conducting State Agency Case Studies

Case study analyses will be conducted for each of the major state agencies with responsibilities for group home children. These case studies will be initiated by first establishing a primary contact within each of these agencies. This contact will be used to gain access to other staff within the agency overseeing services for group home children. We will also acquire information about relevant data and policies and procedures used by the agency to govern the services they provide to group home children. Through document review, focus groups, and interviews within and across agencies, we will record existing state processes related to the planning, funding, administration, and monitoring of residential and educational services for group home children.

The ultimate goal of these analyses will be to document the role of each agency in relation to housing and educating group home children. These write-ups will include descriptions of agency responsibilities; the staff positions assigned to carry them out; the policies, procedures, and practices related to these responsibilities, including those used to govern and provide oversight to direct providers of services to group home children (e.g. group homes and the schools they attend); and the data available to track, monitor, and account for these services. Write-ups for each agency will also describe linkages or cooperative arrangements with other agencies in regard to the provision of services for group home children. In providing detailed documentation of existing processes and data systems, we will be able to identify deficiencies, redundancy, and inefficiencies, which could be addressed through changes in policies, procedures, and practices.

These case study analyses will produce a BPR policy and procedures schematic for each agency, which will be a diagram of the structures in place for the provision and governance of services for group home children. A final schematic will depict what occurs, and what is missing, at the state level across agencies regarding the provision of an articulated and coordinated set of services. We will also document data elements maintained within and across state agencies. The case study for each agency and the accompanying schematic will be submitted for agency review and approval prior to inclusion in study reports.

Methods for Conducting County Case Studies

In-depth case studies will be conducted in the eight counties listed above. Through a combination of document and record review, focus groups, interviews, and observations within and across the multiple local level agencies involved with the care and education of group home children, we will be able to describe the existing processes through which educational placements occur in different counties. This effort will require varied forms of data collection and analyses from a large number of sources, including placement agencies (children's service agencies, probation, mental health), school districts, special education units, group home care providers, school sites (including NPSs), inter-agency committees and groups, and licensing agencies. We will also identify and document the data sources (automated and non-automated) used to support placement processes, and any new information systems being developed through the Foster Youth Services (FYS) Program or other sources.

The county-level studies will incorporate sufficient variability to provide an in-depth

examination of what is happening to group home children across the state. We will use these data to document and describe the effects of the mix of state and local policies and procedures on educational services for group home children. The documentation and quantification of current practices and procedures is essential to producing the kinds of grounded and very specific policy recommendations called for in this study. This county-level case study analysis constitutes a major focus in gathering and analyzing data for this study. It will include the following components:

- Student placement profiles, which will document the residential and educational placement histories of a sample of children currently in group homes. This will be accomplished within each county through a combination of electronic and hardcopy file review and follow-up interviews with case workers, care providers, school staff, and others involved with individual children in the sample. Toward this end, we will work to assess, gain access to, and analyze extant county data. The development of student placement profiles will also involve site visits to a sample of NPSs within each county to conduct interviews with school owners/operators and administrative and instructional staff; to review application, monitoring, financial, and student records; and to observe facilities and instructional practices.
- Policy and procedure schematics, which we will develop from documentation and observation of inter-agency coordination efforts, including SB 933 Coordinating Councils, Foster Youth Services Program Advisory Groups, and local collaborative groups and initiatives. The policy and procedure schematics will also reflect the understanding that is gained through the student placement profile process.

Each of these major research methods is further discussed below:

Student placement profiles

Student profiles will be a major focus of our county-level analysis. Prior studies demonstrate the difficulties associated with obtaining complete information on individual group home children and their educational placements. Without such data, however, perceptions cannot be confirmed and the parameters of specific issues in educational placements cannot be defined. We believe that it is critical that this study provide a solid foundation of data upon which to support conclusions regarding the appropriateness of existing policies, procedures, and practices, and to make specific recommendations for their improvement. Based on what we obtain from local databases, we will analyze and report the placement history of all group home youth in each of our eight case study counties.

From our prior work we realize that just as state-level data are insufficient to allow detailed tracking of students over time, data quality will also vary considerably from county to county. In some of our case study counties, student placement profiles will have to be uncovered, researched, and documented piece by piece. Thus, in addition to the analyses we will conduct using extant data from the case study counties, we will also “handcraft” student placement profiles, as needed, to produce a final sample of approximately 30 group home youth in each selected county. Overall, we will compile detailed placement profiles, documenting the “how and why” of residential and educational placements to the extent possible, for an extensive sample of group home youth.

We will randomly select the group home youth for our county samples using several stratification variables to obtain adequate representation. We will consider the origin of the child's residential placement, including the three primary placement types: dependency, probation, and mental health. We will also consider the rate classification level of the placement because it may relate to the educational placement options that are available to the student. These options include:

- District public school (could be public school in district other than district of child's residence)
- District public school with NPA services
- Community day school (primarily for probation placements)
- On-site (on group home site) school staffed by COE staff
- On-site school staffed by district personnel
- NPS--including on-site and community-based schools
- Juvenile hall

Compilation of the “handcrafted” histories will begin with a review of different agency records related to a sample of children selected from county placement agency files including court records, placement and mental health caseworker files, and school records. For some children, these data may be accessed through the county’s Foster Youth Services Program, while for others we will need to work across agencies. For example, within Los Angeles County, the existence of Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE’s) Foster Youth Data System will provide a starting point for examining the residential and educational placements of approximately 2000 children in LCI placements. At a minimum, the system includes information on: the current placement of each child; whether or not the child is currently enrolled in school; and the type of school in which the child is currently enrolled. For a more limited number of children (35% to 65% depending on the variable), more complete information is available on recent changes in placements; prior schools attended; credits earned; location of transcripts/cumulative records; existence and location of an IEP; prior expulsions; incidence of recent suspensions and trancies, and other variables. Copies of the LACOE database will be requested and analyzed.

These record reviews will then be supplemented with interviews and focus groups with case workers, care providers, school staff, educational surrogates, advocates, probation officers and others to fill data gaps and to collect detailed accounts of how residential and placement decisions are made, and the factors limiting the ability to make the most appropriate placements which best meet children’s needs. Interviews will be conducted with staff at different organizational levels within each agency to allow us to document the policies, procedures, and practices, particularly undocumented and individual practices that come into play at each level. We will also interview a sample of NPS directors and others affiliated NPSs to discuss how students come to be placed at the facilities, and the various funding streams and costs associated with the NPS. The information gathered from the NPSs will help to determine the current funding mechanisms and incentives or disincentives associated with the educational placement of group home children. The placement profiles will be further strengthened through interviews with the students themselves. Draft protocols for use in interviews with NPS staff and group home children are shown in Appendix G.

We recognize and anticipate that we will encounter substantial obstacles in attempting to

access student records. We will attempt to obtain this access through the courts and local agencies. In addition, the active participation of the state level agencies involved in this study is also important to help ensure that we obtain access in a timely manner. The time required to obtain access to these data may also have implications for the study design. For example, we may need to use retrospective data instead of prospective data with regard to what is happening (or has happened) educationally to our sample of group home children.

The development of student placement profiles will provide substantial data on such important system indicators as the number and causes of changes in residential and educational placements which children experience; the number of children who are not enrolled in school and the amount of school time which they miss; the number of children in NPSs, their length of stay in these facilities, and their prior educational histories vis-à-vis special education services.

Policy and procedure schematics

Through the development of policy and procedure schematics, we will document the processes that are in place to serve group home youth. As the result of the implementation of SB 933 and the expansion of the Foster Youth Services Program, local counties have recently initiated and/or expanded efforts to achieve inter-agency coordination in the delivery of services to foster children. The counties are at different stages in this process, and it will be important to record their current status and future plans so that they may be considered in developing additional recommendations for changes in policies. We will document these efforts through interviews with group members; reviewing prior agendas, minutes, and reports; and direct observation of meetings during the term of the study.

For example, the FYS Advisory Group within San Diego County appears to be a strong inter-agency collaborative which includes representatives of key agencies and groups including representatives of the County's Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), the County Probation Department, local school districts affected by group home students, SELPA administrators, the public defender's office, a judge of the dependency court, the larger group home operators in the County, a representative of the CASA Program and others. We anticipate that the FYS Program will prove to be a key study resource in many respects. The group has worked collaboratively and recently instituted policies under which children will not be placed into group homes by HHSA without appropriate educational records, including transcripts histories and copies of IEPs, being provided by the placing caseworker. We believe that the strong participation of the key agencies in this group will greatly facilitate understanding of the systems in place and areas for improvement.

In addition to efforts at coordination and collaboration, the study will also document deficiencies in this area. For example, different restrictions related to confidentiality and information sharing which govern the individual agencies continue to limit coordination and collaboration in many ways. The types of multi-disciplinary assessments that support proper residential and educational placements of children do not take place because of limitations of budget, time, and information. The nature and scope of these deficiencies and gaps will be identified through interviews and direct observations of agency staff activities, and documented for purposes of systems redesign.

Fiscal Analyses

As mentioned, the 2000 Budget Act Item (6110-001-0890, provision 14) that authorized this study states that it “should include, but not be limited to, funding issues resulting from inter-SELPA transfers, the opening of new LCIs or NPSs during the school year and LCI placement practices that may be impacting special education funding.” Some additional elaboration of these questions is summarized in the Preliminary Issues Section of this report.

We will use all aspects of the study design, as summarized in the Methods Overview section of this report, to address these questions. As a part of the state-level analyses, we will fully investigate and document current laws, regulations, procedures and policies affecting the placement of children in LCIs and NPS. We will also meet and confer with such state entities as the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Association of Private Special Education Schools (CAPSES), and others to solicit input directly from these organizations in regard to current laws, regulations, procedures and policies and their perceived effect on the placement of children in LCIs and NPS.

In the eight case study counties, we will use the process of developing profiles of a sample of individual group home children to assist us in documenting what actually happens to a sample of children as a result of current laws, regulations, procedures and policies. This will allow us to quantify the extent to which there may be unintended consequences for individual group home children as a result of current laws and procedures. We will also use this exercise to gain a better understanding of the elements within the existing laws and procedures that are causing the observed outcomes.

For example, in a prior study tracking the education experiences of group home children over time (Caywood, 2000), it was found that about one-third to one-half of the children in the study sample received little or no schooling over the period of time studied. What was not fully explored was why these children were not in school. Anecdotal evidence associated with the study, and other evidence gained through the prior AIR study on this subject (2001), suggest that barriers associated with funding and the assumption of fiscal responsibility were often at the heart at these gaps in schooling. An important component of the county case study efforts will be to identify exactly which rules, regulations, and laws appear to be obstacles to the provision of appropriate and effective educational services for group home children and exactly what it is about these rules and laws that seem to be causing the observed difficulties. Through these county analyses, we will be able to be more specific than before in regard to documenting these processes and quantifying their impact on group home children.

Last, the Stakeholder Group will provide the forum for discussing the results of these findings within the context of the diverse interests that are affected by current laws and regulations and would be directly impacted by any proposed changes. This group will be used to assist the study team in uncovering all of the relevant rules, laws, and regulations affecting current practice; in providing input in regard to their perceptions of the effects of these rules and laws, and in proposing and discussing viable policy alternatives.

Stakeholder Group

As described in the “Work completed to date” section of this report, the first Stakeholder Group meeting was held on February 22, 2001. This group includes representatives from various public agencies at the state and local levels, LCIs and group homes, and advocacy groups. (See Appendix I for a list of the stakeholder members.) The Stakeholder Group will meet at least three times through the duration of the study.

The purpose of this group is to continue to inform the development of the issues list for the study, to inform the policy discussion in general and the fiscal policy discussion in particular, and to inform the development and consideration of policy alternatives. An important strength of this group is the breadth of perspectives it represents. This diversity of viewpoints and opinions needs to be taken into account and represented in deriving policy recommendations that can be realistically implemented and that will result in better services for group home students. As discussed at the first Stakeholder Group meeting, we will develop sub-committees as needed to further inform the study team in regard to specific policy issues. At present, we are in the process of forming a fiscal policy subcommittee and a state policy subcommittee.

Potential Barriers

As presented in the proposal, a number of theoretical and practical problems can be expected in association with this study. One potential problem is accessing the state- and county-level data. We are working closely with the CDE and the state Advisory Group to facilitate access to these data. We will also use these state contacts in establishing county data contacts. The state can establish a strong precedent in regard to allowing access to data that the counties can look to as an indication of the importance of this study. We are in the process of obtaining “agent of the state” status, which facilitated access to student records and to individual group home children in the previous study. (See Appendix J for a draft of the Agent of the State letter.)

As described above, we will track the residential and placement records of a number of case study students over time as a centerpiece of this work. We believe this approach to be critical to producing the definitive data and case history information that will thoroughly document the implications of the state’s policies and procedures for individual group home children. However, we know that this will require access to records that are often difficult for researchers to obtain. At the local level, members of the study team have only gained access to court and social service agency records of minor dependents after extended periods of time.

As an example, for one particular county-level study, obtaining access to records required separate approval processes by the dependency court and the children’s services agency within the county. A court order by the presiding judge of the county’s dependency court provided access to hard-copy court records, which contain a great deal of information on each child’s history and characteristics. Eight weeks were required to obtain the order, however. Additionally, the children’s service agency within the county required that an internal human subjects review process be conducted in relation to the same study before it would allow access to its records. This review took

six months to complete. Once approval to review the records had been granted to the researcher, access to the agency's records themselves was limited to certain hours during the week since that was the only time during which computer terminals and desk space could be made available to the research team by the agency.

We realize the importance of confidentiality and will work through the AIR Internal Review Board process to develop an agreement for the protection of human subjects. An example of a prior agreement that was developed for the previous study is attached in Appendix K.

Beyond the confidentiality issues associated with these records, the reservations of county agencies, group home providers and schools regarding participation in studies such as this seems to reflect a reluctance to be charged with inappropriate practices. Although all parties are guaranteed confidentiality, many representatives of the agencies involved with these children seem to have strong concerns regarding the consequences of having information about their practices made public. We believe that this reluctance may impact the amount and quality of information that we are able to collect from some parties.

For this reason, we are working diligently to earn the trust of case study county officials, to develop relationships allowing us to gain access to the needed information, and to show creativity and persistence in making the best use of whatever data are available and in whatever form. The study team believes that gaining access to appropriate records will require the proactive and intensive involvement of members of the study's Advisory Group, the Stakeholder Group, and our project consultants, as well as the involvement of other state agencies including the Department of Social Services and the Department of Mental Health. Using these procedures we are confident that we can overcome the considerable obstacles confronting the successful completion of this project.

Development of Recommendations

All proposed components of this study will contribute to the final work product, the key component of which will be a set of specific recommendations for the redesign of existing policies, procedures, and practices related to the education of group home children at both the state and local levels. This final set of recommendations will be substantiated by the policy and procedure schematics of existing and redesigned processes at both the state and local levels, and the series of student placement profiles outlining the education of over 200 group home students. The policy and procedure schematics of these processes will involve the creation of diagrams of the inputs, processes, and outputs associated with the educational placements of group home children. These models will show the flow of information that supports these processes. The student placement profiles will document the "how and why" of the residential and educational placements. Both products will serve as a "detailed road map" to inform the development of a set of recommendations for improving services for group home children.

Appendix A:
List of Advisory Group members

American Institutes for Research

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

Contact List for Advisory Group by Organization/Category March 1, 2002

Advisory Group		
Heather Carlson	DOF	(916) 445-0328 Heather.Carlson@dof.ca.gov
Jeff Bell	DOF	(916) 445-0328 Jeff.Bell@dof.ca.gov
Gerry Shelton	CDE	(916) 323-8068 gshelton@cde.ca.gov
Jennifer Borenstein	LAO	(916) 319-8338 Jennifer.borenstein@lao.ca.gov
Carol Bingham	CDE	(916) 324-4728 cbingham@cde.ca.gov
Melody James	CDE, SpEd	(916) 322-2235 mjames@cde.ca.gov

Appendix B:
Minutes from the 2/22/02 Stakeholder Group meeting

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

Minutes

Stakeholder Meeting 2/22/02

Attendees:

Amy Alhadeff	Fresno FYS
Carol Bingham	CDE
David Neilsen	Children And Family Services (Mental Health)
Dick Schnetzer	CAPSES
Hank Mattimore	Juvenile Justice Commission and CASA worker
Jennifer Borenstein	LAO
Gerry Shelton	CDE
Jonathan Pearson	California Partnership
Kay McElrath	SDUSD
Kim Connor	Senate Office of Research
Loretta Morris	Youth Development Services, Contra Costa COE
Maria Ramiu	Youth Law Center
Mark Shrager	LAUSC
Melody James	Spec Ed- CDE
Mildred Browne	MDUSD
Nicette Short	CASFA
Pamela Choice	UCBerkeley
Tanya Lieberman	Senate Education Committee
Wayne Miyamoto	CAPSES
West Irvin	DSS
Tom Parrish	AIR
Carolyn Delano	SRA
Cheryl Graczewski	AIR
Connie Conroy	AIR
Sally Bolus	Lodestar

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 20, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM in AIR's Sacramento conference room.

I. Introduction and composition of stakeholder group

The Meeting began with self introductions which highlighted the composition of the stakeholder group. A suggested addition was a representative for the Juvenile Court system because they place 3,000 to 5,000 kids in group homes. A brief discussion of the stakeholder group makeup ensued with an invitation to alert the Project Team of any additional stakeholder suggestions.

II. Overview of the study

During a PowerPoint presentation describing the sponsor, the project organization, the Advisory Group, the consultants, a review of related past studies done by AIR, the goal of the study, the research study questions, the timeline, the counties selected, and a description of Phase I and II methods, those in attendance offered their perspectives on these topics and on the general issues being considered in this study.

When discussing how the study's eight counties were selected questions were raised about the peripheral "top of the rim" counties and if we will look at counties that export out of state. The counties that we have selected are Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Mateo, Shasta, Stanislaus, and Yolo. These were selected to include diversity in size, geography, data capacity, FYS representation, percentage of import/export group home kids, as well as a balance of urban, suburban, and rural locals. The group agreed this was a good representative sample and that the more remote counties will be incorporated in other ways. Carolyn Delano will take the lead in Alameda, Fresno, Shasta, and Yolo counties. Sally Bolus will lead in Los Angeles and San Diego. Tom Parrish's focus will be on San Mateo and Stanislaus counties.

III. Stakeholder group

The stakeholder invitees, not all of whom were in attendance at this meeting, provide representation from the following groups: California Alliance of Child and Family Services, California Association of Private Special Education Schools, California Department of Education, Special Education Office of the California Department of Education, California State Budget Office, California Partnership, Children and Family Services, Fresno Unified School District, Department of Social Services, Foster Youth Services, Juvenile Justice Commission Court Appointed Special Advocates, Legislative Offices (Assemblywoman Aroner's Office, Legislative analyst office, Senator Alpert's Office, Senate Office of Research, Senate Education Committee), Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Non Public School (LCI), San Diego Unified School District, San Diego County Office of Education, University of California at Berkeley, Youth Development Services of the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and the Youth Law Center.

IV. Other groups meeting related to our subject matter

One group cited was the Los Angeles pilot health passport project. Another effort that is underway is one by DSS to examine the rate setting structure for group homes. Also mentioned was a committee convened to consider legislative changes to make Medicaid funds more accessible.

V. Other publications, reports, documents that we should have

We discussed a list of publications in hand and what we might be missing. The following were mentioned during the discussion: AB 427, AB 806, AB 886, AB 602, the US Department of Civil

Rights data that has full and abbreviated educational statistics and a lot of studies, Title 19, The McCain Act, and a local Los Angeles study that is associated with Judge Terri Friedman.

VI. The primary issues identified and discussed

Capacity - Is there sufficient capacity within the multiple agencies and institutions involved with foster children, particularly those with special needs? The following discussion was heard: Inappropriate placements occur. Sometimes kids are not welcomed into public schools. There is a problem with special education because the programs are full. There is a waiting list for NPS because public programs are full. Sometimes more expensive solutions are created because less expensive options are not available. Do socio-economic status, race and ethnicity play a role? Who gets services often depends on advocacy. Even if there is a surrogate parent it is only on paper. There are not enough school psychologists to do assessment testing, and counseling. There is an incentive to place students out of state.

Responsibility and Accountability – Comments by stakeholder group participants included: There is little compliance. Who does what and how do they work together? Is there a lack of responsibility and accountability at both the state and local levels? There is a law but enforcement is a problem. Caseloads create a compliance problem. Education, Welfare and other government codes are often not accessible and appropriate. Sometimes rules are used as a hindrance. Missing paperwork for IEPs, lost as the child is moved from place to place, was cited as an example. This needs to be fixed, not just tweaked. Instead of making incremental changes we need advocates. The big purpose, what is right for the kid versus what the law says, is lost, thereby highlighting the need for advocacy. Not sure that the infrastructure is all there (example no one at CDE is responsible); the importance of advocacy was mentioned again. We should watch the scope (there are 15,000 Group Homes and 100,000 Juvenile facilities) but we should track a youth if he ends up in a juvenile court school. Other words used during this discussion for this category were authority, expectations, priorities, monitoring, integrated approaches, holistic approach, and disincentives. Some suggestions were to contact the chief probation officer for counties, mental health, welfare director, and county school directors and to tie the study in with the juvenile justice department. It was noted that Alameda and Contra Costa have collaboration with juvenile justice, mental health, and SELPA. It was suggested that the study team look at a local Los Angeles study associated with Judge Teri Friedman that assigned a task force to learn about educational outcomes.

Data systems – There is an absence of information and adequate data system infrastructures at both state and local levels regarding the educational needs, status, and progress of children that contributes to the lack of accountability and potential for inappropriate placements. Stakeholder comments included: CASEMIS is not always accurate. Sacramento has a database system, Child of Sacramento, that is internet based. County level data systems may be helpful. Cited examples were: Santa Barbara, San Mateo, Los Angeles counties. Los Angeles is “the model.” There are no state wide systems that we can access now. There are confidentiality issues to deal with. The FYS has some data because it is required to know who is in school. It was recommended that we get in touch with CSIS staff.

Inter-agency Coordination and Collaboration – There is a lack of inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination of the delivery of services to children, which in some cases reflect

adversarial relations between agencies. The following comments were made by stakeholder participants: There is some confusion about who is responsible for what. Putting together a schematic was suggested. It would be useful to talk to kids but the study team will need to get authority. Do the records reflect the student's experience? Talk to teachers, visit classrooms to find out what they know about the needs of particular kids. Interview kids in a group, but not within their own groups. Behavior problems create placement problems. There are not enough beds in the public system. There should be a needs assessment done for each student and then a match made with the placement setting. This is key. To access agencies or data the study team should go through the regular steps before approaching legislative members.

Fiscal Arrangements – The NPS/LCI funding system will be a major focus of this study. Stakeholders noted that the system needs clarity; that there is an incentive to place students into group homes rather than incarcerate them to get services. There is an incentive to choose the cheapest placement. Will the study team tie money to kids? If the study team looks at the hierarchy they will see there are positions that need to be added. The study team may not need to examine rates because a study is already underway by DSS. However, the study team needs to understand the rates to know if there are issues. Rates may articulate with not enough beds. The study team may need to work with DSS. Probation based placements can create funding eligibility problems. Incarcerated kids lose Medicaid.

VII. Proposed sub-committees

Finance

State policy

VIII. Next Steps

Stakeholders suggested the need to get our state level needs to the agencies ASAP so they can get organized. The proper level of state agency contacts need to be identified. Perhaps the project study team should speak with county mental health, welfare director, county school directors, and all related SELPAs. Subcommittees need to be formed within the stakeholder group.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 20, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM in AIR's Sacramento conference room.

Appendix C:

Supplemental data

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes Phase 1 Report

Supplemental Data Elements

The following data was compiled during Phase 1 of this study.

The first table, “Placement of Foster Youth In County, Out of County, Out of State, by County,” lists numbers and percentages of all foster youth for each county in California and shows where all foster youth received services (in county, out of county, or out of state). These data were obtained from the California Department of Social Services, CMS/CWS Reports.

The second table, “CA Special Education Students by Category of Disability and Residential Status,” displays the total count of special education students in California by category of disability and residential status (foster care, group home, or neither). This table breaks out the total count by disability category. This data was obtained through a match of the CWS/CMS and CASEMIS data systems performed for AIR’s previous study for the CDE, “Studies of Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes.”

The third table, “Percentage of Special Education Students Attending Nonpublic Schools By Residential Status and Category of Disability,” shows the number and percentage of special education attending NPS broken out by residential status and category of disability. These data were also obtained through the previous group homes study mentioned above.

The fourth table shows the number of special education students by county in California and the percentage of all students in the county who are classified as receiving special education services. These data were from the December 1999 release of CASEMIS.

The following are variables for which we currently have data on file:

- School-age Population
- Total Group Home Children
- Special Education Group Home Children
- Percent Special Education
- LCI Group Home/ 100,000 Population
- FYS Grant Recipients 2000/01
- Total Group Homes
- NPS in County
- NPS Students Served in County
- Special Education Population
- Percent of County in Special Education
- Percent of Special Education in NPS

- Percentage of all Students in Co. in Group Homes
- CMS/CWS Total Out of Home Placements
- Foster Youth Placed In County
- % Foster Youth Placed In County
- Foster Youth Placed Out of County
- % Foster Youth Placed Out of County
- Foster Youth Placed Out of State
- Foster Youth Placed % Out of State

Placement of Foster Youth In County, Out of County, Out of State, by County

COUNTY	CMS/CWS Total Out of Home Placements	Foster Youth Placed In County	% Foster Youth Placed In County	Foster Youth Placed Out of County	% Foster Youth Placed Out of County	Foster Youth Placed Out of State	% Foster Youth Placed Out of State
Alameda	5,194	3,059	58.89%	1974	38.01%	161	3.10%
Alpine	4	0	0.00%	4	100.00%	0	0.00%
Amador	37	13	35.14%	24	64.86%	0	0.00%
Butte	744	532	71.51%	181	24.33%	31	4.17%
Calaveras	129	77	59.69%	51	39.53%	1	0.78%
Colusa	33	16	48.48%	17	51.52%	0	0.00%
Contra Costa	2,425	1,680	69.28%	700	28.87%	45	1.86%
Del Norte	199	151	75.88%	42	21.11%	6	3.02%
El Dorado	222	132	59.46%	87	39.19%	3	1.35%
Fresno	3,452	2,829	81.95%	583	16.89%	40	1.16%
Glenn	70	27	38.57%	42	60.00%	1	1.43%
Humboldt	349	301	86.25%	37	10.60%	11	3.15%
Imperial	452	372	82.30%	75	16.59%	5	1.11%
Inyo	41	21	51.22%	20	48.78%	0	0.00%
Kern	2,756	2,466	89.48%	225	8.16%	65	2.36%
Kings	369	277	75.07%	85	23.04%	7	1.90%
Lake	212	127	59.91%	80	37.74%	5	2.36%
Lassen	109	66	60.55%	41	37.61%	2	1.83%
Los Angeles	37,253	32,010	85.93%	4288	11.51%	955	2.56%
Madera	228	152	66.67%	76	33.33%	0	0.00%
Marin	187	106	56.68%	78	41.71%	3	1.60%
Mariposa	34	27	79.41%	7	20.59%	0	0.00%
Mendocino	411	273	66.42%	130	31.63%	8	1.95%
Merced	498	277	55.62%	206	41.37%	15	3.01%
Modoc	46	29	63.04%	17	36.96%	0	0.00%
Mono	7	2	28.57%	5	71.43%	0	0.00%
Monterey	393	269	68.45%	104	26.46%	20	5.09%
Napa	194	142	73.20%	49	25.26%	3	1.55%
Nevada	123	76	61.79%	44	35.77%	3	2.44%
Orange	4,389	3,200	72.91%	1083	24.68%	106	2.42%
Placer	416	217	52.16%	193	46.39%	6	1.44%
Plumas	61	35	57.38%	26	42.62%	0	0.00%
Riverside	4,980	3,780	75.90%	1077	21.63%	123	2.47%
Sacramento	5,953	4,343	72.95%	1429	24.00%	181	3.04%
San Benito	65	41	63.08%	23	35.38%	1	1.54%
San Bernardino	5,719	4,136	72.32%	1403	24.53%	180	3.15%
San Diego	7,433	6,361	85.58%	575	7.74%	497	6.69%
San Francisco	2,343	1,243	53.05%	1018	43.45%	82	3.50%
San Joaquin	1,692	1,285	75.95%	392	23.17%	15	0.89%
San Luis Obispo	436	335	76.83%	88	20.18%	13	2.98%
San Mateo	610	310	50.82%	277	45.41%	23	3.77%
Santa Barbara	413	299	72.40%	104	25.18%	10	2.42%
Santa Clara	2,746	1,833	66.75%	790	28.77%	123	4.48%
Santa Cruz	357	256	71.71%	82	22.97%	19	5.32%
Shasta	628	519	82.64%	88	14.01%	21	3.34%
Sierra	12	2	16.67%	10	83.33%	0	0.00%
Siskiyou	212	130	61.32%	80	37.74%	2	0.94%
Solano	779	585	75.10%	164	21.05%	30	3.85%
Sonoma	615	442	71.87%	170	27.64%	3	0.49%
Stanislaus	829	598	72.14%	217	26.18%	14	1.69%
Sutter	268	119	44.40%	146	54.48%	3	1.12%
Tehama	209	150	71.77%	55	26.32%	4	1.91%
Trinity	47	28	59.57%	19	40.43%	0	0.00%
Tulare	1,426	1,143	80.15%	259	18.16%	24	1.68%
Tuolumne	141	94	66.67%	43	30.50%	4	2.84%
Ventura	854	665	77.87%	162	18.97%	27	3.16%
Yolo	531	203	38.23%	312	58.76%	16	3.01%
Yuba	359	136	37.88%	215	59.89%	8	2.23%
ALL Counties	100,876	77,997	77.32%	19949	19.78%	2930	2.90%
Sample Total	55,930	45,889	82.05%	8,314	14.87%	1,727	3.09%
% of All in Sample	55.44%	58.83%		41.68%		58.94%	

Source: California Department of Social Services, CMS/CWS Reports, January 11, 2002

CA Special Education Students by Category of Disability and Residential Status

	<i>Not Foster Care, Not Group Home (a)</i>	<i>Foster Care, Not Group Home (b)</i>	<i>Group Home (LCI) (c)</i>
Total Count	626,077	11,536	8,578
Emotional Disturbance	3%	9%	41%
Learning Disability	55%	56%	28%
Mental Retardation	6%	8%	11%
Speech Lang. Imp.	26%	17%	3%
Other Disability	11%	10%	17%
Total Percent	100%	100%	100%

Source: Data matched between CWS/CMS and CASEMIS for the “Studies of the Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes” (Parrish et al., 2001)

Percentage of Special Education Students Attending Nonpublic Schools By Residential Status and Category of Disability

	<i>Not Foster Care, Not Group Home (a)</i>	<i>Foster Care, Not Group Home (b)</i>	<i>Group Home (LCI) (c)</i>
All Special Education Students:			
Total Count	626,077	11,536	8,578
Students Enrolled in Nonpublic Schools	8,208	444	3,975
Percent Students to NPS by Category of Disability:			
Emotional Disturbance	25%	28%	77%
Learning Disability	1%	2%	30%
Mental Retardation	1%	3%	22%
Speech Lang. Imp.	0%	0%	12%
Other Disability	2%	3%	21%
Total Percent of Students in Nonpublic Schools	1%	4%	46%

Source: Data matched between CWS/CMS and CASEMIS for the “Studies of the Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes” (Parrish et al., 2001)

CA Special Education Counts by County

COUNTY	Special Education Population	Percent of County in Special Education
Alameda	22,517	5.65%
Alpine	41	17.01%
Amador	812	11.83%
Butte	4,487	8.51%
Calaveras	829	8.51%
Colusa	453	7.22%
Contra Costa	19,222	7.76%
Del Norte	610	7.90%
El Dorado	3,283	7.93%
Fresno	20,566	7.56%
Glenn	661	7.36%
Humboldt	2,932	8.85%
Imperial	3,278	6.42%
Inyo	426	9.25%
Kern	14,631	6.61%
Kings	2,638	6.60%
Lake	1,270	8.71%
Lassen	690	8.89%
Los Angeles	175,955	5.92%
Madera	2,737	7.33%
Marin	4,129	7.73%
Mariposa	354	9.54%
Mendocino	2,399	10.05%
Merced	5,764	7.63%
Modoc	257	10.01%
Mono	316	11.40%
Monterey	7,198	5.75%
Napa	2,366	7.66%
Nevada	1,369	6.32%
Orange	47,082	5.73%
Placer	5,430	8.38%
Plumas	387	8.40%
Riverside	35,150	7.39%
Sacramento	24,372	6.96%
San Benito	1,160	7.51%
San Bernardino	39,942	6.95%
San Diego	52,638	6.31%
San Francisco	6,860	4.34%
San Joaquin	12,911	7.19%
San Luis Obispo	4,454	7.44%
San Mateo	10,000	5.30%
Santa Barbara	6,364	5.67%
Santa Clara	26,509	5.61%
Santa Cruz	5,111	7.46%
Shasta	3,617	7.72%
Sierra	119	16.28%
Siskiyou	956	8.62%
Solano	8,587	7.23%
Sonoma	9,090	7.76%
Stanislaus	11,770	8.15%
Sutter	1,949	8.20%
Tehama	1,055	6.97%
Trinity	383	12.11%
Tulare	8,257	6.37%
Tuolumne	1,024	8.84%
Ventura	14,008	6.41%
Yolo	2,972	6.62%
Yuba	1,844	8.34%
ALL Counties	646,191	6.42%
Sample Total	300,035	6.12%
% of All in Sample	46.43%	

Source: California Special Education Management Information System, December 1999 release

Appendix D:

County grids

Alameda County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	Tracking foster youth exported to other counties and those sent to Alameda from other counties are fiscal concerns. Foster youth sent to Alameda County require “extra attention” to make sure the “sending county” monitors and assumes fiscal responsibility for its foster youth.
Capacity	Alameda County consists of 19 cities, with a general population of 1,443,750. Of these people, approximately 5,041 are foster children. In late 2000, Alameda County’s Foster Youth Services Program reported 1,023 foster youth living in group homes. Of this number, 266 foster youth were placed in group homes outside of Alameda County. According to the Foster Care Rates Bureau, there are 73 foster care homes with approximately 630 beds in this county.
Accountability and Responsibility	Although both the Department of Social Services and the County Probation Department have responsibility for placing foster children, the Probation Department typically sends most of its referrals out of the county. Both departments work with the Community Care Licensing Department, which is reportedly very active in Alameda County. “Both agencies need to be better,” is how Foster Youth Services staff sum up the collective quality of the departments.
Data	The Alameda County Office of Education, in conjunction with the Foster Youth Services Program, manages a FileMaker Pro database, which includes fields that track the “timetable” when health, education, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) records and information are requested and received.
Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	<p>The Alameda County Office of Education, Foster Youth Services Program, and Hayward State University work closely together to conduct workshops for placement agencies and group home providers regarding the “needs of group home youth.” These workshops include education panels, and discussions about Needs and Service Plans, emancipation, and the responsibilities of agencies.</p> <p>Interviewees report that Alameda County has an active Foster Youth Advisory Group and a Steering Committee that meet regularly to discuss placement issues. Both groups are representative in their makeup, visible, have been in existence for years, and are proactive within agencies and with individuals interacting with foster youth. However, coordination and collaboration need improvement among placing agencies. As one interviewee put it, “they need to start talking...they deal with the same kids and they don’t even speak the same language.”</p>
Advocacy	Interviewees report that there is “no one group or agency in charge” of foster youth in Alameda County. The Steering Committee works hard to serve as an advocate for foster youth, but ends up focusing most of its energies on “system change,” rather than working with foster youth.

Fresno County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	Although Fresno lacks a non-public school (NPS), interviewees agree that the county is in desperate need of one. Many years ago, Fresno had a non-public school that was shut down due to abhorrent facility conditions and educational and psychological services. When inappropriate placements are identified, these foster youth are often exported out of the state, causing further mobility and educational costs. Last year, a parent determined that his child was inappropriately placed and that the terms of his Individual Education Plan (IEP) were not being fulfilled. The parent subsequently filed a lawsuit against the Fresno County Office of Education.
Capacity	<p>Fresno County is comprised of 43 cities, with a general population of 799,400. Of these people, approximately 3,569 are foster children. As of February 20, 2002, Fresno County has approximately 56 foster care homes with approximately 380 beds. Fresno County serves many foster youth from other counties; as a result, many group homes have waiting lists. These waiting lists impact school enrollment because many foster youth are systematically enrolled in alternative schools such as court schools, instead of in traditional schools.</p> <p>Although Fresno includes foster youth who could benefit from the services provided in non-public school settings, currently Fresno County does not have a non-public school. County officials have no plans to start one; however, group home operators and district staff report there is a strong, obvious need. In 2000, an existing group home applied to be a non-public school. Although the application was approved, the group home operator reports she cannot find a qualified teacher.</p> <p>Fresno County has four Special Education Local Planning Areas (SELPA's).</p>
Accountability and Responsibility	One of the goals of Fresno County's Foster Youth Program is to proactively teach group home providers and caseworkers about their responsibilities to place and monitor foster youth in appropriate education settings. In reality, interviewees report that the group home provider usually assumes responsibility for his or her residents; there is no formal agency or protocol for accountability. Many group home providers complain that placing agencies try to place foster youth with special education needs in homes and schools that cannot serve them.
Data	<p>Last year, the Fresno County Office of Education purchased a database created by Robert Ayasse, University of California at Berkeley, which was originally implemented in Mount Diablo. To date, there are 340 foster youth records housed in this database. All database monitoring is conducted by Foster Youth Services staff.</p> <p>In the absence of the Health and Education Passport System, the Fresno Unified School District developed a database to track the mobility of all foster youth served in Fresno County. Recently, Fresno Unified secured a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with both the County Probation and County Social Service departments to share education-related information with them.</p>
Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	<p>The Foster Youth Services Program serves as the "hub" for foster youth interagency coordination in Fresno County. Program staff work closely with group homes, and staff from Fresno Unified, Clovis Unified, and Central Unified, to ensure that foster youth are appropriately placed. The Foster Youth Services Program provides ongoing in-service training to placement workers, school staff, and group home staff, providing updates on laws and special education services and qualifications.</p> <p>Fresno County's Probation Department has monthly meetings, as does the Foster Youth Program's Advisory Group. However, group home and County Office of Education staff report that coordination among juvenile probation and social service caseworkers needs to be improved.</p>
Advocacy	In lieu of a formal advocacy system, interviewees report that group home operators typically assume the role of advocate for their residents. The Foster Youth Service Program is the only institution that advocates for foster youth education services, although it has little interaction with foster youth.

Los Angeles County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	Interviews with Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) staff indicate that they have concerns that fiscal incentives are leading to the placement of children in non-public schools (NPSs) within the County, although they can provide no data or estimates relevant to an assessment of the magnitude of this problem. FYS staff report, however, that some districts are highly resistant to placing children in NPSs.
Capacity	<p>Los Angeles County is comprised of 170 cities, with a general population of 9,519,305. Of these people, an estimated 38,217 are foster children.</p> <p>The number of Licensed Children's Institution (LCI) placements has ranged from 5000 to 6000, and includes approximately 425 LCIs, which is 50% of all the LCIs in the state. The DCFS was recently sued by a coalition of advocacy groups for retaining children in the County's temporary shelter for extended periods. DCFS maintains that permanent placement of these children was often not possible because of the special needs they presented.</p> <p>Within the County, approximately 1.7 million school-aged children are served by 81 different school districts, and six different Special Education Local Planning Areas (SELPA) coordinate services for approximately 651,000 children. Many schools are overcrowded and on year-round schedules.</p>
Accountability and Responsibility	<p>Both the DCFS and the LA County Probation Department have traditionally placed responsibility for educational placements with LCIs. Analyses of early data available through the County's Foster Youth Services (FYS) Data System indicate that 46% of LCI residents for whom more complete data were available were attending NPSs. The educational placements and success of all foster youth have received increased attention, however, as a consequence of the inter-agency efforts described below.</p> <p>In 2001, the Probation Department sued the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), charging that it had failed to provide an adequate education to children in court and community schools. Many wards of the courts placed in LCIs are served through these facilities.</p> <p>From a broader perspective, deaths of children in foster care over the past decade, including deaths of children while in placement at County-operated shelters, created concerns about the County's ability to ensure the basic safety and security of foster children.</p>
Data	<p>LACOE's FYS Program has developed a database that currently includes records for approximately 2,400 LCI youth. All records are not complete, however; complete transcript information is available for approximately 55% of children in the system.</p> <p>LA County has received \$1.5 million from the state to support the development of a county-wide Children's Health and Education Passport web-based data system to maintain data on the more than 50,000 children in foster care. The County has solicited bids for system development and selected vendors. FYS data staff are involved in system design. Ultimately, staff from all agencies involved with foster children will be able to access the system and share information. The agencies involved are currently working out what information can legally be shared.</p>

Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	<p>In October, 1998, following the death of a child in the County-operated emergency shelter, the Interagency Consortium for Children's Services (ICCS) was established to develop a multi-disciplinary, integrated approach to service delivery to replace what was perceived as a fragmented and ineffective system. The Consortium consists of the department heads for DCFS, Mental Health, DHS, Probation, LACOE and the County's Chief Administrative Officer, and is supported by a staff representing all agencies. To date, ICCS has developed a plan for the implementation of Wraparound services, created a program of multi-disciplinary assessments for SED children, obtained foundation funding to support the placement of educational specialist in DCFS regional offices, and pushed for the co-location of agency staff in regional offices.</p> <p>Since its initiation in 1999, the FYS Program in the County has operated to enhance coordination in the exchange of information related to group home children; provided training to DCFS, Probation, district, and school site staff regarding the educational needs of group home children; and hired credentialed counselors and educational community workers to work with group homes to address the educational needs of residents.</p>
Advocacy	<p>To date, the study team has collected limited information on the operations of advocate organizations in Los Angeles County. The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program within the county is perceived to be overwhelmed by the number of children requiring services and CASA-child interaction is relatively restricted, focused primarily on advocacy in the courtroom and/or educational surrogacy.</p>

San Diego County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	<p>San Diego County provides an interesting case study of the fiscal issues associated with the delivery of NPS services to group home children. Following the closure of an on-grounds non-public school (NPS) at a large Licensed Children's Institution (LCI), the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) offered to operate an on-grounds school at 50% of the amount of money paid to the previous NPS. Through a lobbying effort, the County received approval and additional funding from the State to support the effort for a 12-month period, but is now being told by the state that funding for continuation of the program may not be available. The SDCOE is now attempting to determine if, and how, it can continue to operate the school, which serves approximately 60 students.</p>
Capacity	<p>San Diego County consists of 55 cities, with a general population of 2,816,850. Of these people, 7,411 are foster children.</p> <p>The number of LCI placements has recently ranged from 850 to 900 children. There are 602 group homes in the County, with the largest home having 82 beds. In a recent report issued by the County's Dependency Policy Group, it was reported that the number of beds is not adequate, particularly to serve children with more severe needs, although the gap is not quantified. Placement agency staff also report that the children who are being referred for residential placements present far more severe needs than they have in past years and thus present even more difficult placement issues.</p> <p>Within the County, approximately 488,000 school-aged children are served by 42 different school districts, and six different Special Education Local Planning Areas (SELPAs) coordinate services for approximately 54,000 children. Group homes are concentrated in districts serving higher proportions of minority and disadvantaged children. There are 32 non-public schools (NPSs) in the County, but the total enrollment in these facilities cannot be easily determined.</p>
Accountability and Responsibility	<p>The education of children in foster care began to receive focused attention within the County in the late 1990s. As part of an effort to reform both the dependency and delinquency systems in the County, the Juvenile Court and County officials issued the <i>Education Services for Dependent Children Joint Policy Statement</i> in November, 1998. In June, 2000 the Joint Policy Committee of the County formed an Education Committee to provide oversight for the coordination and development of a more cohesive and effective system for monitoring childrens' education. The Committee generated a set of recommendations in November, 2001, several of which focused on accountability and responsibility. The Committee reported that, historically, educational placements in the County had been left to the caregivers and the local school systems.</p> <p>In the meantime, the death of a child held in restraint at an on-grounds NPS at a large group home prompted an intensive examination by County officials of LCI and NPS operations. The NPS involved was subsequently closed. Visits by county officials, including a judge, to NPSS raised several questions regarding the quality of education being provided at several facilities.</p>
Data	<p>San Diego County's Foster Youth Services (FYS) Program is in the process of establishing a FYS Network to facilitate the exchange of information among placing agencies, school districts, group home providers, and other service providers. An educational liaison position has been created to facilitate records transfer, and a database has been developed that currently contains educational records for approximately 225 children. FYS staff are working with staff from the County's Immunization Registry system to provide access to the immunization records of all foster children in the County.</p>

Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	<p>Interagency coordination related to educational issues is currently occurring through three mechanisms within the County. The Joint Policy Committee (JPC) mentioned above is described as including key stakeholders from within the system, and is co-chaired by the presiding judge of the juvenile court division, the director of the Health and Human Services Association (HHSA), and the Chief Probation Officer. The Committee reports to the County Board of Supervisors. One county supervisor has taken an active interest in foster youth. The Education Committee established by the JPC includes 16 members representing the court, county attorneys, HHSA, advocacy groups, the County Office of Education (COE) and the Casey Family Foundation. This Committee focuses on educational issues related to all children in foster care. The FYS Advisory Group, which was established in 2000, includes broad representation of all key stakeholders in the County, including HHSA, the Probation Department, the court, the public defender, the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), advocacy groups, group home operators, and local school districts. The FYS Program has worked to achieve several systemic changes in local inter-agency relationships, procedures, and practices related to educational placements. All inter-agency efforts within the County focusing on education are relatively new developments, however, commencing within the past three years.</p>
Advocacy	<p>The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program in San Diego County has taken a proactive effort to respond to the large demand for advocacy on behalf of individual children in foster care by establishing programs requiring different forms and levels of involvement on the part of program volunteers. CASAs are assigned to children on a long-term basis, and establish close relationships with the children they serve, taking them on outings and maintaining regular personal contacts. Roughly one-half of CASAs serve as educational surrogates for the children they serve. In contrast, Court Appointed Special Monitors (CASMs) have limited personal contact with the children they serve, but focus on assessing the educational and other service needs of the child through the review of records and contacts with parties involved in the child's case. CASMs place high priority on ensuring that the educational needs of children are being appropriately met.</p>

San Mateo County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	Interviewees expressed concerns about non-public school funding and incentives, and the “routine” placement of foster youth both out of county and outside of California.
Capacity	<p>San Mateo County is home to 29 cities, with a general population of 707,200. Of these people, approximately 617 are foster children. Based on a February 20, 2002 report, there are 12 foster care homes with approximately 98 beds in this county.</p> <p>Interviewees commented on the increase in recent years in the number of probation group home residents, which is now approximately 200. With a shortage of beds statewide and a demand for specialized group homes (for probation placements) countywide, one interviewee worried about the quality of care San Mateo foster youth will receive in the future.</p>
Accountability and Responsibility	In lieu of no “state accountability system,” a lack of beds in San Mateo, and growing caseloads for placement workers in San Mateo, interviewees reported high rates of mobility for foster youth, poor tracking systems, and a fragmented “sense” of responsibility for the well-being of foster youth. One interviewee said, “the person with a child at any given moment, whether it be the school, the group home, the hospital, the shelter, etc., has responsibility for the child.” Another said, “It’s amazing no one detects the needs of these kids until they act up or get in trouble.”
Data	San Mateo uses the CWS/CMS system. In addition, County Probation and the County Health and Human Services Department share a database that contains a variety of health and education information for foster youth.
Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	San Mateo County is a Foster Youth Services Program recipient and has a strong, active advisory group comprised of members from education, placing agencies, group home providers and community-based organizations. Further, the Foster Youth Services Program has hired an “education liaison” who resides at one of the county’s shelters. This person assists the county office of education, group homes, and schools with the facilitation of the transfer of both health and education records.
Advocacy	At the county level, interviewees reported that the Health and Human Services Department and public health nurses fill the role of advocate for foster youth. Recently, the Health and Human Services Department hired 2.5 persons to serve as educational liaisons for foster youth.

Shasta County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	Interviewees report that foster youth who reside in group homes bear a “negative stigma” and residents do not want to see growth in group homes. As a result, many foster youth are exported to other counties. Nevertheless, Shasta is recognized as one of the main counties to which other counties export foster youth. One interviewee expressed concerns about non-public school placements, in that some counties place foster youth inappropriately.
Capacity	Shasta County is home to 30 cities, with a general population of 163,300. Of these people, approximately 589 are foster children, with about 150 foster youth currently placed in group homes outside of the county. According to the Foster Care Rates Bureau, there are 30 foster care homes in the county, with approximately 202 beds.
Accountability and Responsibility	Shasta County’s Child Protective Services (CPS) assumes responsibility for all foster youth placed in the county. Although interviewees complimented CPS on its focus, attention to foster youth issues, and commitment to expanding services, many commented on the fact that CPS field workers are suffering from caseloads that are simply unmanageable. In addition, some interviewees reported that the agency suffers from a lack of communication between field workers and management.
Data	Shasta County is using the CWS/CMS data system, although interviewees report that training has been slow and many problems have been encountered trying to input information and setting up the education portion of the Passport.
Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	<p>Shasta County has a Local Interagency Network for Children and Family Services (LINCS), which consists of child protective services employees, public health nurses, drug and alcohol counselors, mental health nurses and two education employees. In addition, Shasta County also has an active Children’s Policy Council, which serves as a local advisory group.</p> <p>Interviewees report strong coordination efforts among agencies and refer to the county’s Local Interagency Family Treatment Team (LIFTT) as a model for how various agencies can work together. LIFTT creates a collaborative plan that outlines actions to be taken by each agency, including mental health, probation, social services and education.</p>
Advocacy	Public health nurses and the Foster Youth Services education employees are working together to ensure that all foster youth entering Shasta County will have education information available within 24 hours. All education information is shared with county social services staff during their monthly visits.

Stanislaus County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	None reported.
Capacity	<p>Stanislaus County is comprised of 18 cities, with a general population of 447,000. Of these people, approximately 783 are foster children. There are 26 foster care homes in the county, with approximately 208 beds.</p> <p>There are several non-public schools in the county and some group homes have their own non-public schools, such as Creative Alternatives. However, of the 100 children Creative Alternative serves, only one resident is enrolled in its non-public school; its mission is to “get all kids into the public school system.”</p> <p>According to one interviewee, almost all public schools will take the children without proper documentation if necessary.</p>
Accountability and Responsibility	<p>In all California counties, the Department of Social Services is responsible for placing foster youth, and all placement workers are supposed to meet with the children at least once a month. However, according to interviewees, only 50 percent of the placement workers make these visits; the interviewees identified this as a failure of the county-level agencies. One interviewee reported that six months went by before a social worker came to check on the child. This situation leaves the group home operators with full responsibility for their residents because there is no state monitoring agency in place to ensure that placement workers follow the law and check in on their placements.</p> <p>One interviewee questioned why schools aren't more responsible when it comes to enrolling foster youth.</p>
Data	No countywide system was identified through the interviews conducted with group home staff.
Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	<p>Stanislaus is not a Foster Youth Service Program grantee, but is the only county that has a semblance of an urban center in Modesto.</p> <p>Group home staff reported that they utilize community-based services to assist them in providing health and education services to their residents.</p> <p>Social services, mental health, and probation need to formally work together. Interviewees reported that it is very hard to find stable placements for “hyperactive” foster youth. These youth are “kicked out of home after home for being too hyper. When they can’t find a placement for the child, he is exported to another county.”</p>
Advocacy	Interviewees reported that both placement workers and receiving schools should serve as advocates for foster youth. Ideally, said one, they should work together so the placement worker has current educational information.

Yolo County

Issue	Current Status/Information
Fiscal Arrangements	According to interviewees, not enough money is allocated for the education needs of foster youth, and, as a result, schools struggle with emotionally disturbed (ED) youth. Another interviewee reported that the identification processes for ED and special education youth need to be improved because, “a few children can deplete the funds that are given to the districts” when they are misdiagnosed and/or placed incorrectly.
Capacity	<p>Yolo County includes 18 cities, with a general population of 168,700. Of these people, approximately 542 are foster children. Based on a February 20, 2002 report, there are eight foster care homes with a total of approximately 100 beds in the county. Of these 100, 54 belong to a single group home provider.</p> <p>Yolo County has only a handful of non-public schools. According to one group home provider, there may be only one non-public school currently operating in the county.</p>
Accountability and Responsibility	The Department of Social Services and group home providers reportedly share responsibility for the educational oversight of foster youth at the county level.
Data	No countywide system was identified.
Interagency Coordination and Collaboration	Yolo County is not a Foster Youth Services recipient; however, group home providers and placement workers interviewed reported that they work together as needed. In addition, school districts, mental health hospitals, therapeutic hospitals, Medi-Cal, and a variety of community-based organizations work with and serve foster youth. For example, community-based organizations are primarily utilized for recreational activities.
Advocacy	Interviewees said, “the problem is there is no advocacy for foster youth.”

Appendix E:
List of publications

List of Publications, Reports and Documents - By Topic

Education:

Advocates For Children. (1998). *The Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care: The Need for System Reform*. New York, NY: Author.

Advocates For Children. (2000). *Educational Neglect: The Delivery of Educational Services to Children in New York City's Foster Care System*. New York, NY: Author.

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Appendix F:

List of legislation

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

Legislative (Bill) References

Assembly Bills (AB):

AB 333 Would increase amount a foster child is allowed to retain as cash savings

AB 364 Would establish specific children per child welfare services worker ratios

AB 557 Public Social Services: Foster Care

AB 571 Adoptions by Relatives

AB 575 Methamphetamines: Foster care

AB 636 Foster Care: Foster Care Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001

AB 691 Foster Children: Education

AB 705 Dependent Children: Siblings

AB 797 Foster Care Providers: Educational Support

AB 853 Dependent Children: Visitation

AB 899 Rights of Foster Children

AB 929 Child Abuse

AB 1105 Child Care: Foster Family Homes

AB 119 Foster Care: Emancipated Youth

AB1330 Foster Youth: Health Outcomes

AB 1582 Foster Care: Group Home Rates

AB 3632 Mental Health

AB 3920 Granting state general funds to Ventura County through the State Department of Mental Health to pilot a new program in child and family services

AB 377 Education: Was passed as a result of AB 3920 in 1988, granting funds to enable expansion of the model statewide, An act to amend Section 35168 of the Education Code, relating to instructional materials.

AB 3015 "The Children's Mental Health Services Act"

AB 899 Rights of Foster Children: This bill would require those facilities that provide foster care services for children to make certain information regarding the rights of children in foster care available to those children. By changing the definition of a crime, this bill would result in a state-mandated local program.

AB 1119 Foster Care: This bill would authorize a child who is in foster care and receiving AFDC-FC payments or aid under the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment program on his or her 18th birthday, and who thereafter, emancipates, be eligible to receive aid following his or her 18th birthday and emancipation, while participating in an educational or training program or any activity consistent with their transitional independent living plan up to the age of 23 years.

AB 1261 Independent Living Program

AB 615 Pupil motivation and maintenance: This bill would require each outreach consultant utilized for purposes of a school-based motivation and maintenance program to possess a degree from an accredited college or university, or a Dropout Prevention Specialist

Certificate from a California State University, as prescribed, and would make clarifying changes in related provisions.

Other AB:

AB AB 602, 686 , 2278, 2307, 2453, 2012, 1734

Senate Bills (SB):

SB 933 Coordinated effort to protect children residing in group homes

SB 434 Distance Learning

SB 681 Foster Care: Increase Capacity of Group Homes

SB 841 Foster Care: Early Start to Programs

Other SBs:

SB 147, SB 1391, SB 1579, SB 209, SB 2160, SB 1272, SB 989

Welfare and Institutions Code:

Section 5600 Bronzan-McCorquodale Act: This part is intended to organize and finance community mental health services for the mentally disordered in every county through locally administered and locally controlled community mental health programs.

5600.3. To the extent resources are available, the primary goal of use of funds deposited in the mental health account of the local health and welfare trust fund should be to serve the target populations identified in the following categories, which shall not be construed as establishing an order of priority: (a) (1) Seriously emotionally disturbed children or adolescents.

(2) For the purposes of this part, "seriously emotionally disturbed children or adolescents" means minors under the age of 18 years who have a mental disorder as identified in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, other than a primary substance use disorder or developmental disorder, which results in behavior inappropriate to the child's age according to expected developmental norms. Members of this target population shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

48852 Five-day LEA notification

18987.6. It is the intent of the Legislature to do all of the following:

(a) Permit all counties to provide children with service alternatives to group home care through the development of expanded family-based services programs and to expand the capacity of group homes to provide services appropriate to the changing needs of children in their care.

(b) Encourage collaboration among persons and entities including, but not limited to, parents, county welfare departments, county mental health departments, county probation departments, county health departments, special education local planning agencies, school districts, and private service providers for the purpose of planning and providing individualized services for children and their birth or substitute families.

(c) Ensure local community participation in the development of innovative delivery of services by county placing agencies and service providers and the use of the service resources and expertise of nonprofit providers to develop family-based and community-based service alternatives.

Section 317 (f)

(f) Either the child or the counsel for the child, with the informed consent of the child if the child is found by the court to be of sufficient age and maturity to so consent, may invoke the psychotherapist-client privilege, physician-patient privilege, and clergyman-penitent privilege; and if the child invokes the privilege, counsel may not waive it, but if counsel invokes the privilege, the child may waive it. Counsel shall be holder of these privileges if the child is found by the court not to be of sufficient age and maturity to so consent. For the sole purpose of fulfilling his or her obligation to provide legal representation of the child, counsel for a child shall have access to all records with regard to the child maintained by a health care facility, as defined in Section 1545 of the Penal Code, health care providers, as defined in Section 6146 of the Business and Professions Code, a physician and surgeon or other health practitioner as defined in Section 11165.8 of the Penal Code or a child care custodian, as defined in Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code. Notwithstanding any other law, counsel shall be given access to all records relevant to the case which are maintained by state or local public agencies. All information requested from a child protective agency regarding a child who is in protective custody, or from a child's guardian, shall be provided to the child's counsel within 30 days of the request.

Section 827, subdivision (b) (2),

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), written notice that a minor enrolled in a public school, kindergarten to grade 12, inclusive, has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed any felony or any misdemeanor involving curfew, gambling, alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, carrying of weapons, a sex offense listed in Section 290 of the Penal Code, assault or battery, larceny, vandalism, or graffiti shall be provided by the court, within seven days, to the superintendent of the school district of attendance. Written notice shall include only the offense found to have been committed by the minor and the disposition of the minor's case.

Health and Safety Codes:

Section 1530 Such regulations shall designate separate categories of licensure under which community care facilities shall be licensed pursuant to this chapter, which shall include a separate license category for residential care facilities for the elderly. Such regulations shall also designate the specialized services which community care facilities may be approved to provide pursuant to this chapter.

Section 1501 The Legislature hereby finds and declares that there is an urgent need to establish a coordinated and comprehensive statewide service system of quality community care for mentally ill, developmentally and physically disabled, and children and adults who

require care or services by a facility or organization issued a license or special permit pursuant to this chapter.

Section 1507 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the requirements of subdivision (c) are met, the department shall permit incidental medical services to be provided in community care facilities for adults by facility staff who are not licensed health care professionals but who are trained by a licensed health care professional and supervised according to the client's individualized health care plan prepared pursuant to subdivision (c).

Section 1531 The regulations for a license shall prescribe standards of safety and sanitation for the physical plant and standards for basic personal care, supervision, and services based upon the category of licensure.

Government Codes:

Sections 7579, 7579.1, 7579.5

7579: Prior to placing a disabled child or a child suspected of being disabled in a residential facility, outside the child's home, a court, regional center for the developmentally disabled, or public agency other than an educational agency, shall notify the administrator of the special education local plan area in which the residential facility is located.

7579.1: Dealing with the discharge of any disabled child or youth who has an active individualized education program from a public hospital, proprietary hospital, or residential medical facility.

7579.5: A surrogate parent shall not be appointed for a child who is a dependent or ward of the court unless the court specifically limits the right of the parent or guardian to make educational decisions for the child.

Code of Federal Regulations:

Section 300.7 of Title 34

Section 300.26 of Title 34

Education Codes:

Section 48850, 48854, 48856

48850: Every county office of education shall make available to agencies that place children in licensed children's institutions information on educational options for children residing in licensed children's institutions within the jurisdiction of the county office of education for use by the placing agencies in assisting parents and foster children to choose educational placements.

48854 : A licensed children's institution or nonpublic, nonsectarian school, or agency may not require as a condition of placement that educational authority for a child, as defined in Section 48859 be designated to that institution, school, or agency.

48856 : A local educational agency shall invite at least one noneducational agency representative that has placement responsibility for a pupil residing in a licensed children's institution to collaborate with the local educational agency in the monitoring of a placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency.

Section 48900, 48904

48900: A pupil may not be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion unless the superintendent or the principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has committed an act as defined pursuant to one or more of subdivisions (a) to (q).

48904: the parent or guardian of any minor whose willful misconduct results in injury or death to any pupil or any person employed by, or performing volunteer services for, a school district or private school or who willfully cuts, defaces, or otherwise injures in any way any property, real or personal, belonging to a school district or private school, or personal property of any school employee, shall be liable for all damages so caused by the minor.

Section 49069.5

The Legislature finds and declares that the mobility of pupils in foster care often disrupts their educational experience. The Legislature also finds that efficient transfer of pupil records is a critical factor in the swift placement of foster children in educational settings.

Section 49076, 49076 (a)

49076: A school district is not authorized to permit access to pupil records to any person without written parental consent or under judicial order with exceptions.

49076 (a): Access to those particular records relevant to the legitimate educational interests of the requester shall be permitted with restrictions.

Section 56026, 56031,

56026: "Individuals with exceptional needs" defined.

56031: "Special education" defined.

56034: "Nonpublic, nonsectarian school" defined

56035: "Nonpublic, nonsectarian agency" defined

Section 56050

"surrogate parent" defined.

Section 56155.5, 56156, 56156 (c) (d), 56156.4, 56157(a)

56155.5: "licensed children's institution" defined

56156: Each court, regional center for the developmentally disabled, or public agency that engages in referring children to, or placing children in, licensed children's

institutions shall report to the special education administrator of the district, special education local plan area, or county office in which the licensed children's institution is located any referral or admission of a child who is potentially eligible for special education.

56156 (c) (d): Each person licensed by the state to operate a licensed children's institution, or his or her designee, shall notify the special education administrator of the district, special education local plan area, or county office in which the licensed children's institution is located of any child potentially eligible for special education who resides at the facility.

56156 (d): The superintendent shall provide each county office of education with a current list of licensed children's institutions in that county at least biannually. The county office shall maintain the most current list of licensed children's institutions located within the county and shall notify each district and special education local plan area within the county of the names of licensed children's institutions located in the geographical area of the county covered by the district and special education local plan area.

56156.4: Each special education local plan area shall be responsible for providing appropriate education to individuals with exceptional needs residing in licensed children's institutions and foster family homes located in the geographical area covered by the local plan.

Section 56157(a): In providing appropriate programs to individuals with exceptional needs residing in licensed children's institutions or foster family homes, the district, special education local plan area, or county office shall first consider services in programs operated by public education agencies for individuals with exceptional needs.

Sections 56200 through 56218

- (56200-56203)

Requirements for each local plan submitted to the superintendent.

Section 56300

Each district, special education local plan area, or county office shall actively and systematically seek out all individuals with exceptional needs, ages 0 through 21 years, including children not enrolled in public school programs, who reside in the district or are under the jurisdiction of a special education local plan area or a county office.

Section 56342

The individualized education program team shall review the assessment results, determine eligibility, determine the content of the individualized education program, consider local transportation policies and criteria developed pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) of Section 56195.8, and make program placement recommendations.

Section 56360, 56366.9

56360: Each special education local plan area shall ensure that a continuum of program options is available to meet the needs of individuals with exceptional needs for special education and related services, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.) and federal regulations relating thereto.

56366.9: A licensed children's institution at which individuals with exceptional needs reside shall not require as a condition of residential placement that it provide the appropriate educational programs to those individuals through a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency owned or operated by a licensed children's institution.

Division 7 of Title 1

California Code of Regulations (CCR):

Section 60510

Administration, Division 9. Joint Regulations for Pupils with Disabilities, Chapter 1. Interagency Responsibilities for Providing Services to Pupils with Disabilities, Article 7. Exchange of Information Between Education and Social Services, §60510. Prior Notification.

Sections 80000

Education, Division 8. Commission on Teacher Credentialing, §80000. Scope

Section 80076(a)(6)

TITLE 5. Education, Division 8. Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Chapter 1. Credentials Issued Under the Teacher Preparation and Licensing Law of 1970 Article 3. Examinations and Subject Matter Programs, §80076. Board of Examiners' Fee.

Section 80070

TITLE 5. Education, Division 8. Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Chapter 1. Credentials Issued Under the Teacher Preparation and Licensing Law of 1970 Article 2. Credential Types, Authorizations, and Requirements, §80070. Specific Requirements

Sections 84026(c)(1) through (4)

TITLE 22. Social Security, Division 6. Licensing of Community Care Facilities, Chapter 5. Group Homes, Article 3. Application Procedures, §84026. Safeguards for Cash Resources, Personal Property, and Valuables.

Other CCRs:

84072.2, 87072 (a)(4), 87072 (a)(2), (3), (5), (6), (11), (13), (14), (15), (16)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

20 U.S.C., Section 400 et. Seq.

<http://www.ideapractices.org/docs/regs/Fullregs.txt>

Full text of regulations

Penal Code

Section 11165.7

Congress enacted ILP, Independent Living Program (Public law 99-272, Section 477, Title IV-E of Social Security Act)

Public Law 99-272 - The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

Title IV-E of Social Security Act - Grants to States for Aid and Services to Needy Families with Children and for Child-Welfare Services

United States Code, subsections (22) and (25) of Section 1401 of Title 20

Appendix G:

Sample protocols

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF - DRAFT

Referral

- Describe process by which a group home child is admitted to your school. Who is most often responsible for services such as enrollment, transferring records?
- How are teachers trained to recognize a child's special education needs?

Fiscal

- What is your response when you hear foster youth are sometimes placed in a NPS for fiscal reasons, rather than educational-related ones?

Educational Records and Assessments

- What types of education information do you receive from group home providers and placement workers? (transcripts, needs and service plans, appraisals, IEP, previous educational/psychological assessments, etc.)
- In your opinion, what types of education information do you need in order to place a group home resident appropriately in classes?
- How could identifying and assessing children for special educational services be improved and expedited?

Communication around Education Issues

- Describe the extent of communication between you and placement workers.
- If one of your students has an education surrogate, what is the extent of communication between you and the surrogate?
- What is the extent of communication between you and group home staff?

Educational Advocacy

- In your opinion, what do group home residents need in terms of education advocacy to ensure appropriate and quality education placements?
- Who should be the person in charge of making sure foster children get what they need educationally?

Governance and Compliance

- Please describe both the county office of education and the state department of education's role in governance of your NPS.
- Has your NPS ever been through a compliance review? If yes, please describe the process.

Recommendations

- What suggestions can you offer for reforms for ensuring needed educational services for foster children? (legislative, public school system, child welfare system, etc.)

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes

PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GROUP HOME CHILDREN - DRAFT

Resident Information

- What grade are you in?
- How old are you?
- Have you lived in group homes other than this one?
- Have you ever been in a group home outside of this area/state? How many times?

Previous School Placements

- Have you had to change schools because you changed group home placement?
- What would make changing schools easier for you and other foster youth? (explore relationships with teachers/streamlining testing/complete course work/student knowledge of education system and personal needs/education advocacy)

Assessments

- Are you generally given education tests to evaluate your education needs/status at each new school?
- Do you think you usually receive the education services that you need and deserve? If no, what services do you think you need or are missing?

Current School

- To what extent does your current school meet your education needs?

Advocacy

- Who do you talk to about education issues (caseworker, GH counselor, surrogate, parent, guardian)?
How often?

Other Comments

- Would you like to say anything else about the appropriateness and quality of your education?

Appendix H:

Study timeline

Study Timeline

Evaluation Methods	Phase 1 (12/01-2/02)							Phase 2 (3/02-3/03)												Alignment Between Methods and Research Questions*						
	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M										
State-Level																										
Document Review	●														●									X	X	
Extant Data Analysis		●									●													X	X	X
State Agency Case Studies										●														X	X	X
Meet/Confer with State Organizations		●																						X	X	X
Develop Funding Alternatives for Educating Group Home Children				●																				X	X	
Develop BPR Policy/Procedures Schematic							●			●														X		
Case Study Counties																										
Meet/Confer with County Organizations		●												●										X	X	X
Document Review		●												●										X	X	
Extant Data Analysis		●												●										X	X	X
Placement Profiles of Youth		●												●										X	X	X
Site Visits																								X	X	X
Interviews/Focus Groups		●																						X	X	X
Develop BPR Policy/Procedures Schematic										●				●										X	X	X
Stakeholder Group																								X		
Inform Development of Policy Issues List		●												●										X	X	
Provide Information on Policy Alternatives		●												●												
Meetings																										
CDE Staff	●			●																						
State Advisory Group	●			●																						
Stakeholders					●																					
Evaluation Deliverables																										
Draft Interim Report			●																							
Final Interim Report																										
Draft Final Report															●											
Final Report																										
Quarterly Report																										
Progress Reports	M	M	M	Q	M	M	M	Q	M	M	M	M	Q	M	M	Q								X	X	X

M = Monthly Progress Report

Q = Quarterly Progress Report

*Research Questions:

1. What are the key state and local policies, procedures, and practices that influence the educational placement of children in group homes?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the policies, procedures, and practices in determining the educational placement of children in group homes?
3. What are the causes for, and the magnitude of, any problems identified, and the extent to which each cause contributes to the problem?
4. What are effective options for state action to ameliorate the problems? (Possible state actions could include changes in statute, regulations, and administrative policies, or changes in state funding formulas and funding levels.)
5. What local actions, including procedural changes, could ameliorate the problems?
6. What are the estimated state and local costs and benefits of implementing the different options?

Appendix I:
List of Stakeholder Group members

Stakeholder Group Members (25)

STAKEHOLDER MEMBER	AGENCY
Foster Youth Organizations (2):	
Maria Ramiu Staff Attorney 417 Montgomery Street San Francisco, CA 94194 (415) 543-3379, ext 8908 mrami@youthlawcenter.com	Youth Law Center
Victoria Finkler-Rome Policy Analyst 417 Montgomery Street, Suite 900 San Francisco, CA 94101 (415) 398-1063	California Youth Connection
State Agencies (4):	
Susan Ronnback, Consultant Room 5019 State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 445-5202	Senate Budget Office
West Irvin (916) 327-0140 wirvin@dss.ca.gov	DSS
Melody James P.O. Box 944272 721 Capitol Mall (95814) Sacramento, CA 94244-2720 (916) 322-2235 mjames@cde.ca.gov	Special Education – CDE
David Neilsen, Chief Children and Family Services California Department of Mental Health 1600 9th Street, Room 100 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 654-2952 (916) 653-6486 FAX dneilsen@dmhhq.state.ca.us Possible alternates: Zoe Todd	Children and family services
LEA (4):	
Kay McElrath San Diego Unified School District 4100 Normal Street, Room 3141 San Diego, CA 92103 Voice (619) 725-7646 Fax (619) 725-7648 Kmcelrat@mail.sandi.net	San Diego Unified School District

Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting the Education of Children Residing in Group Homes
 A Study Conducted by the American Institutes for Research for the California Department of Education

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Loretta Morris Administrative Specialist 77 Santa Barbara Road Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 (925) 942-3463 lmorris@cccocoe.k12.ca.us	Youth Development Services, Contra Costa COE
Benita Washington Fresno Unified School District 1350 M Street Fresno, CA 93721 (559) 457-3353	Fresno Unified School District
Legal (2):	
Kathleen Harms, Member PO Box 358, Santa Rosa, CA 95402 (707) 544-3463 hmattimore@aol.com Rep sent: Hank Mattimore, Member	Juvenile Justice Commission and CASA worker
Alan Watahara, ESQ, Executive Director 1121 L Street, Suite 304 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 443-1149 awatahara@aol.com or awatahara@capartnership.org Rep sent: Jonathan Pearson	ESQ, California Partnership
Local Placement Agencies (1):	
Ellen Bucci Hacienda Avenue San Mateo, CA 94403 (650) 372-8501 (650) fax	San Mateo Mental Health Child Welfare
Group Home (2):	
Jim Galsterer Executive Director True to Life Children's Services 1800 Gravenstein Hwy Sebastopol, CA 95472	NPS LCI

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Andy Shaw Dion Aroner's office Richmond District Office 101 Broadway, Suite 2-B Richmond, CA 94804 (510) 234-0211 (510) 234-0213 fax Assemblymember.Aroner@assembly.ca.gov	Assemblywoman
Kim Connor, Senior Consultant Senate Office of Research 1020 N Street Suite 565 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 445-1727 (916) 324-3944 fax Kim.Connor@Sen.Ca.Gov	Senate Office of Research
Tanya Lieberman, Principal Consultant Senate Education Committee State Capitol, Room 2082 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 445-5405 phone (916) 445-2522 phone (use after 3-11) 916-322-3304 fax Tanya.Lieberman@sen.ca.gov	Senate Education Committee
SELPA (3):	
Michael Brogan South County Special Education Region San Diego County Office of Education 82 East J Street Chula Vista, CA 91910 Voice (619) 498-8171 Fax (619) 498-8175 Mbrogan@sdcoe.k12.ca.us	San Diego County Office of Education

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STAKEHOLDER MEMBER	AGENCY
<p>Kim Hopko LACOE 9300 Imperial Hwy. EC 207 Downey, CA 90242 Voice (562) 922-6228 Fax (562) 803-8272 Hopko_Kim@LACOE.edu (Note underscore “_” between last and first name in)</p>	<p>LACOE</p>
<p>Mildred Browne, EdD Assistant Superintendent Special Education/Student Services Mt. Diablo Unified School District 1936 Carlotta Drive Concord, CA 94519 (925) 682-8000, ext. 4047 (925) 674-0514 Fax Brownem@mdusd.k12.ca.us Mildredbrowne@mindspring.com Possible alternates: Sherry Silva Leonard Director of Special Services 1305 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240-3148 (209)331-7061 (209)331-7084 Fac sleonard@lodiussd.k12.ca.us Sherry Mudd Foothill SELPA Glendale Unified School District 1700 E. Mountain St. Glendale, CA 92107 Voice (818)246-5378 FAX (818) 246-3537 Smudd@gusd.net.</p>	<p>School Districts</p>
FYS (1):	
<p>Amy Alhadeff, School Psychologist 3636 North First Street, Ste.158 Fresno, CA 93726 (559) 225-0258 (559) 225-0256 fax aalhadeff@fcoe.net</p>	<p>Fresno FYS Coordinator</p>

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STAKEHOLDER MEMBER	AGENCY
NPS (2):	
Dick Schnetzer Chair Governmental Affairs CAPSES PO Box 53970 Irvine, CA 92619 (949) 857-0674 phone (949) 857-3643 fax rcschnetzew@earthlink.net	CAPSES
Wayne K. Miyamoto, Director CAPSES Public & Governmental Affairs 6712 Old Oak Court Citrus Heights, CA 95610-4616 (916) 722-7560 Office (916) 722-2924 Fax ysm1inc@aol.com	CAPSES
PROJECT STAFF	
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Connie Conroy Administrative Associate 650.843.8236 cconroy@air.org	AIR
Sally Bolus Associate Project Director (213) 891-1113 (office) (858) 794-7292 (home) (858) 342-3031 (mobile) (213) 891-0055 (fax) SallyB@lmresearch.org sbolus@san.rr.com	Lodestar Management

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Aaron Ellison Partner 14781 Pomerado Road, PMB-114 Poway, CA 92064 (858) 382-9208 (253) 498-6514 (fax) aellison@humsysdev.com	Human Systems Development
Willie Ellison Principal, Community Crime Prevention Associates 7057 Lazy River Way Sacramento, CA 95831 (916) 421-6809 (916) 421-6517 (fax) (916) 508-5078 (cell) wellisonCCPA@aol.com	Human Systems Development

Appendix J:
Draft agent of the state letter

DRAFT LETTER FOR ACCESS TO RECORDS 3/1/02

Date

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The California State Legislature has required the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct a study evaluating the policies, procedures and practices that affect the education of children residing in Group Homes. The results of this study are to be reported to the Legislature. The CDE has contracted with the American Institutes for Research to conduct this study on the Department's behalf.

As part of this study, it will be necessary to review individual records. Although parental consent is ordinarily necessary for access to pupil records, the law does provide for certain exceptions. Specifically, authorized representatives of state education officials may, with legitimate educational interests, and for purposes of program evaluation, have access to pupil records without parental consent. (Education Code section 49076(a)(3)).

This access is limited by certain conditions. Any data collected from the review of these records must be protected in a manner which will not permit the personal identification of students or their parents by other than those officials. Any personally identifiable data shall be destroyed when no longer needed for the evaluation (Education Code section 49076(a)(3)).

Under these conditions, we have authorized the American Institutes of Research, or persons whom they designate, to conduct such a review of individual student records. We appreciate your cooperation with the person presenting this authorization as a bona fide designee of the American Institutes of Research. If you have questions about the study itself, you may contact the state Project Director, Carol Bingham at (916) 324-4728.

Appendix K:
IRB documentation

Protection of Human Subjects Agreement from Previous Study on Group Homes Conducted for the CDE

Studies of Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes—Statement of Agreement

The California Department of Education, Education Options Office, has contracted the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct Studies of Educational Placement of Children Residing in Group Homes. The project requires that data be gathered on individual children residing in group homes. In accordance with the findings of AIR's Institutional Review Board (IRB), all staff working on this project agree to the following conditions concerning the collection and protection of data:

That group home staff will be contacted in advance of each site visit to discuss how residents will be invited to attend the confidential, voluntary, and anonymous interview sessions.

That no children under the age of 12 years will be allowed to participate in face-to-face interviews.

That during the interviews with children residing in the group homes, a third party social worker who will be present during the interviews will function as an ombudsman for the children during the interview, will be responsible for explaining the purpose of the study and interviews to the children, and will ensure they understand the purpose and that their participation is voluntary.

That the third party social worker will be responsible for recording that each participating child voluntarily agreed to participate. This recording will not be by name, but by interview time slot. For example, "15 year old male interviewed at XYZ Group Home on July 10, 2000 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. stated he understood what was being asked of him and that he was willing to participate."

That project staff provide a detailed protocol to guide study staff during interviews with residents. Protocol will outline specific issues and questions to be covered during each interview to ensure uniformity in objectives and adherence to IRB standards.

That staff will randomly select six to 10 records at both the LCI and attending school site to be reviewed.

That no names or identification information will be shared with staff from LCI or school sites, or with study staff not directly involved with the fieldwork.

That data collected on individual children during site visits from group homes, schools and another other sources will be collected and recorded on a form from which all identifying information can easily be removed (a detachable cover page, for example).

That the cover page will be removed and destroyed as soon as the data collection is complete, normally within 2 or 3 days, and that during the data collection the data collection forms containing identifying information will be kept in the personnel possession of the project staff or under lock and key.

Thomas B. Parrish
Managing Research Scientist

Date